

MARVEL

a special double-sized issue

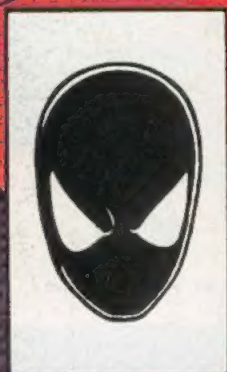
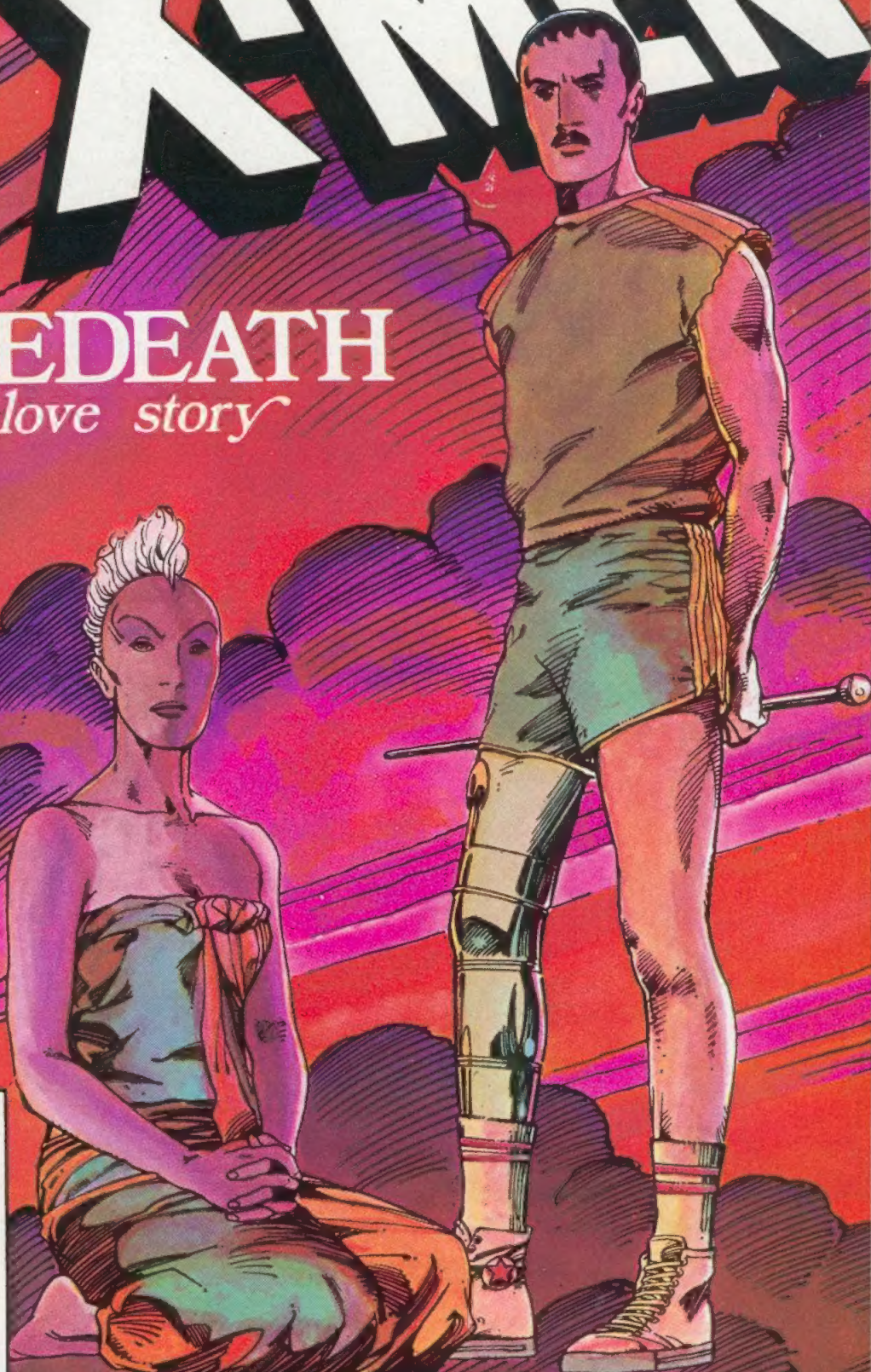


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X-MEN

LIFEDEATH

a love story

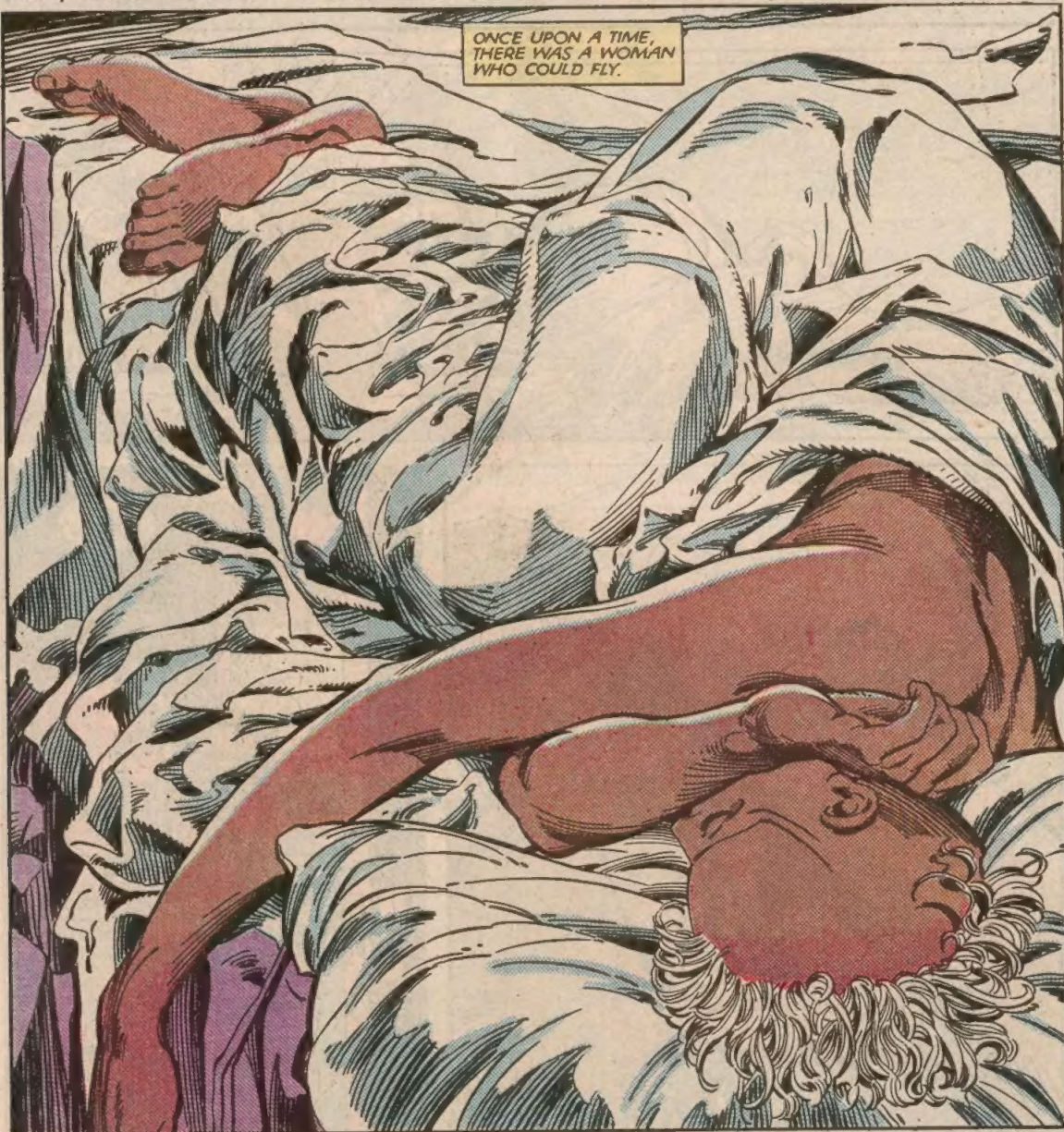


Stan Lee presents the uncanny X-Men

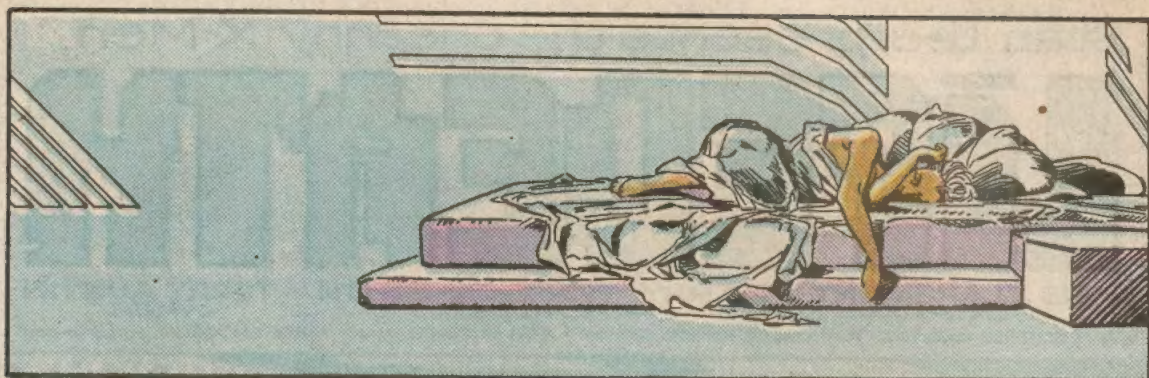
LIFE DEATH

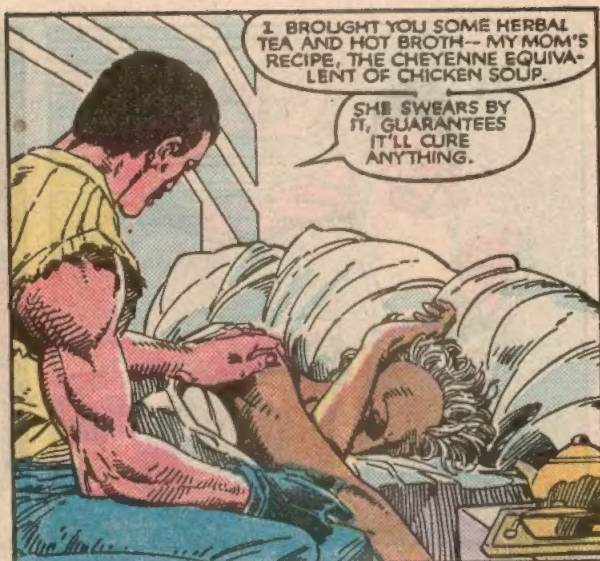
CHRIS CLAREMONT · BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH · TERRY AUSTIN
SCRIPT — STORY — PENCILS — INKER

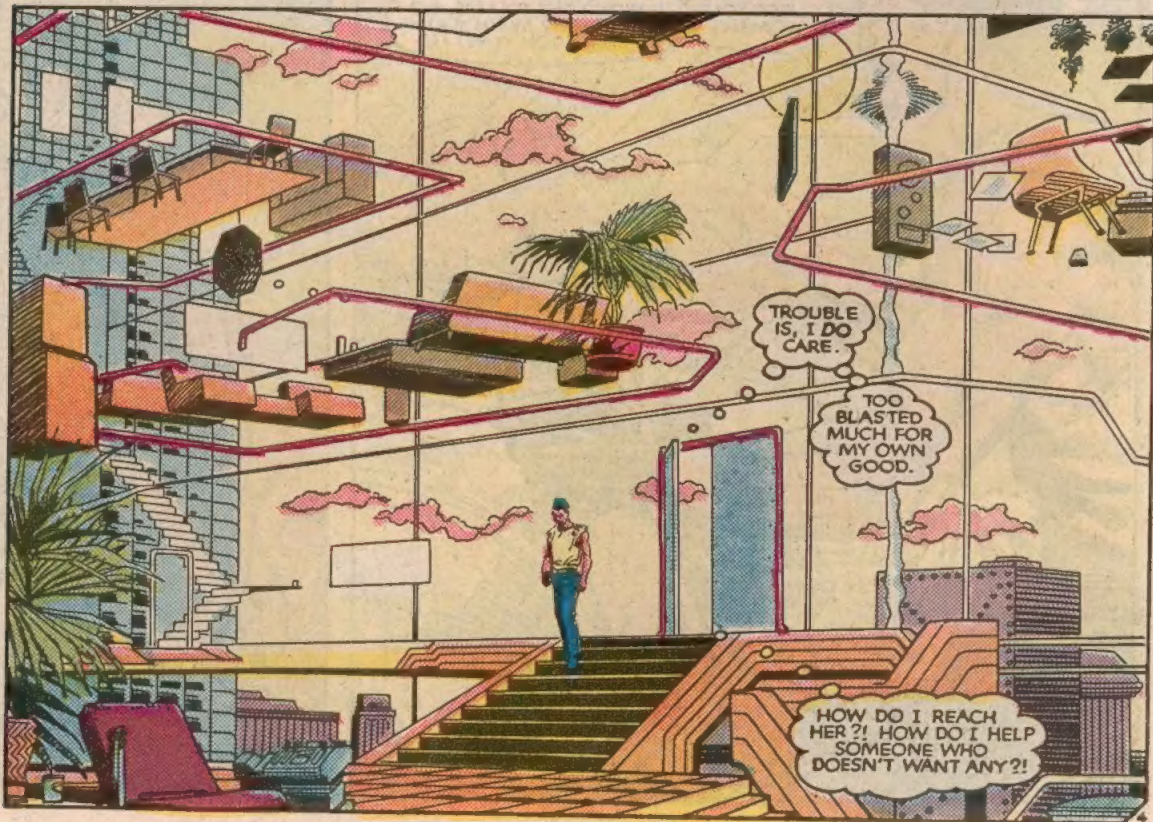
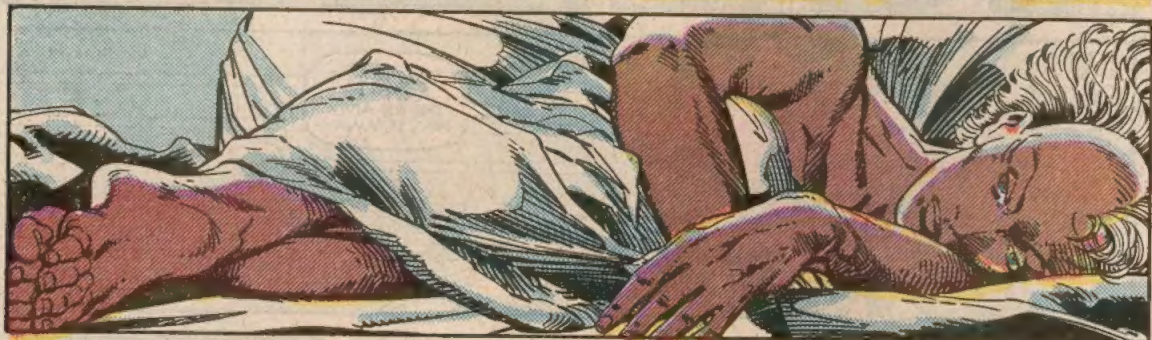
WEIN & SCHEELE colorists · TOM ORZECOWSKI, letterer · ANN NOCENTI, editor · JIM SHOOTER, editor-in-chief



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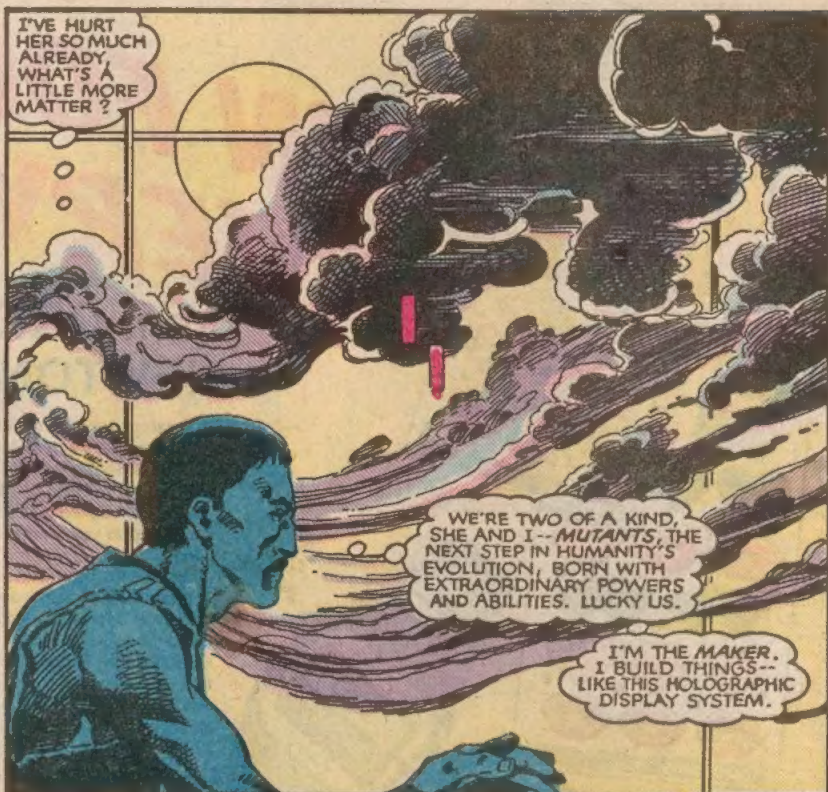






I'M DOING A WONDERFUL JOB SO FAR. MY PATIENT DOESN'T RESPOND TO THERAPY OR TENDER-LOVING-CARE. NO PROBLEM--

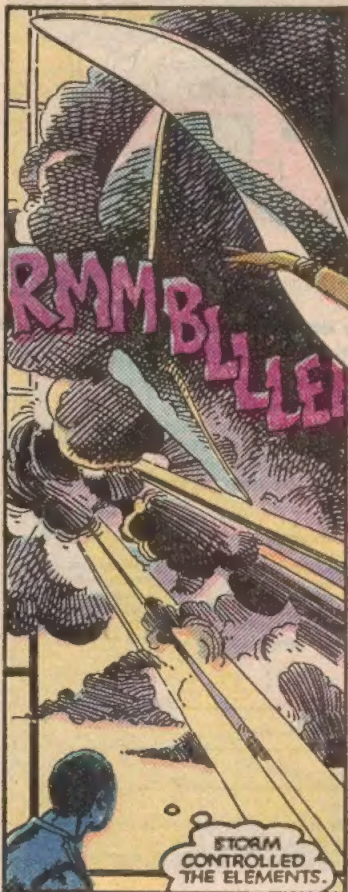
--I'LL SHOVE HER AWAY.



I'VE HURT HER SO MUCH ALREADY. WHAT'S A LITTLE MORE MATTER ?

WE'RE TWO OF A KIND, SHE AND I-- **MUTANTS**. THE NEXT STEP IN HUMANITY'S EVOLUTION, BORN WITH EXTRAORDINARY POWERS AND ABILITIES. LUCKY US.

I'M THE **MAKER**. I BUILD THINGS-- LIKE THIS HOLOGRAPHIC DISPLAY SYSTEM.



RMMBLLLE!

STORM CONTROLLED THE ELEMENTS.



LORD, SHE'S BEAUTIFUL...



"... WITH A SOUL AS LOVELY AS HER BODY."

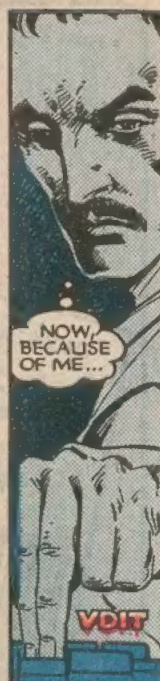
"THE PERSONIFICATION OF LIFE ITSELF."



"SHE CHANGED LAST YEAR. HER GODDESS-LIKE SERENITY GAVE WAY TO AN ALL TOO HUMAN PASSION."



"IT MADE HER LOVELIER THAN EVER."



"NOW, BECAUSE OF ME..."

"VOIT"



"... THAT'S OVER-- THE BEAUTY GONE FOREVER, THE WOMAN DESTROYED."

"SHE WAS LEADER OF THE X-MEN, A BAND OF OUTLAW MUTANT SUPER-HEROES."

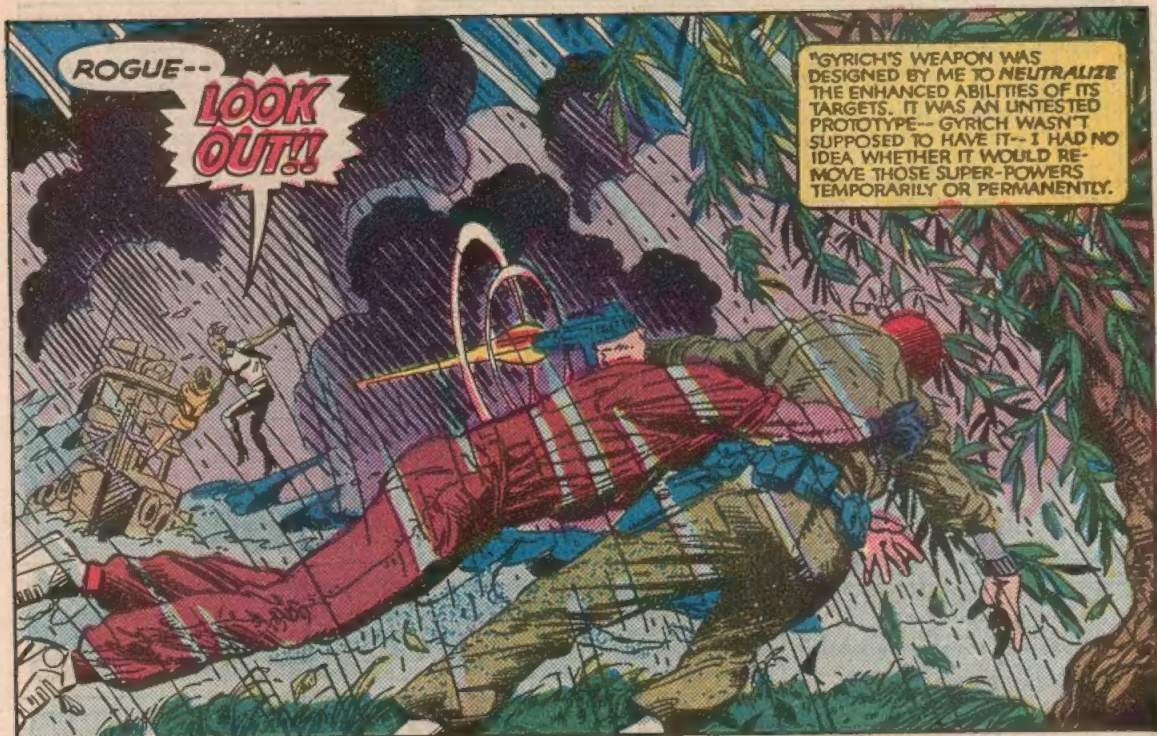
"A FEDERAL STRIKE FORCE WAS AFTER ONE OF THEIR MEMBERS, ROGUE, ON A MURDER WARRANT. THEY CAUGHT UP WITH HER ON THE BANKS OF THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI. WHEN I ARRIVED, SHE AND STORM WERE TOO BUSY SAVING LIVES TO WORRY ABOUT GETTING AWAY."



"MY MISTAKE WAS USING THE MINIMAL SETTING."

"I'VE RE-CALIBRATED FOR FULL POWER!"

"GYRICH-- DON'T!"



"GYRICH'S WEAPON WAS DESIGNED BY ME TO NEUTRALIZE THE ENHANCED ABILITIES OF ITS TARGETS. IT WAS AN UNTESTED PROTOTYPE-- GYRICH WASN'T SUPPOSED TO HAVE IT-- I HAD NO IDEA WHETHER IT WOULD REMOVE THOSE SUPER-POWERS TEMPORARILY OR PERMANENTLY.



"... AS I DID, THAT NIGHT IN 'NAM-- WHEN I REACHED INTO THE LOWEST PIT OF HELL FOR MY SALVATION.



"MIRACULOUSLY, THE TUGBOAT CREW SURVIVED.





I THOUGHT, USING CEREBRO, YOU COULD PIN-POINT ANY MUTANT ON EARTH?

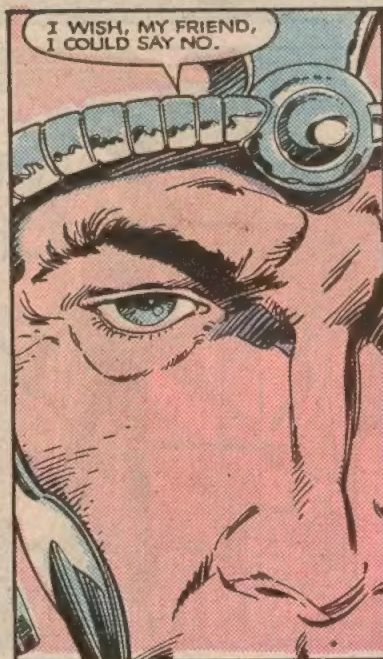
I SHOULD, ESPECIALLY ONE OF YOU X-MEN, BUT I'VE SENSED NOTHING FROM STORM SINCE I WAS STRUCK DOWN BY THAT INCREDIBLE BURST OF PAIN-- A MENTAL SHRIEK OF PUREST AGONY --THROUGH THE PSIONIC RAPPORT I SHARE WITH YOU ALL.

THE PSYCHIC TRAUMA WAS SO INTENSE, IT RENDERED ME UNCONSCIOUS FOR OVER A DAY, AND LEFT ME UNABLE TO UTILIZE MY TELEPATHIC ABILITIES BEFORE THIS.



PROFESSOR, WAS WHAT YOU FELT...

...ORORO'S DEATH?



I WISH, MY FRIEND, I COULD SAY NO.

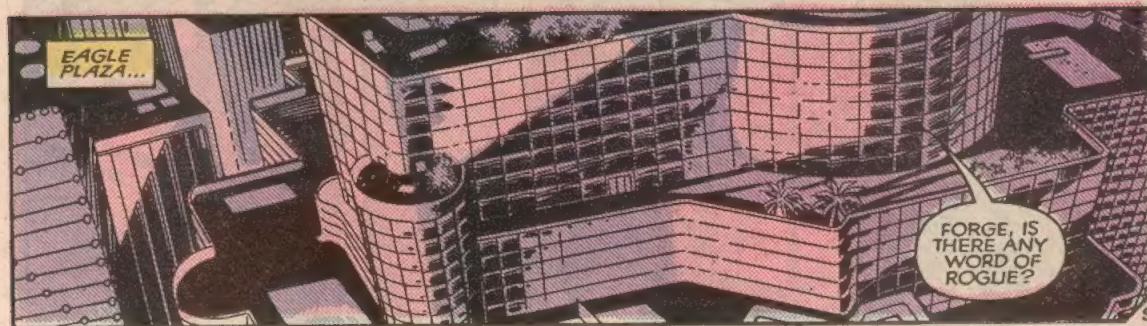


HOWEVER, LET'S ASSUME SHE'S STILL ALIVE, AND SOMEHOW SHIELDED FROM MY PROBES. SHE LEFT THE MANSION IN SEARCH OF ROGUE.

I'LL SCAN FOR HER. PERHAPS SHE CAN LEAD US TO STORM, OR TELL US OF HER FATE.

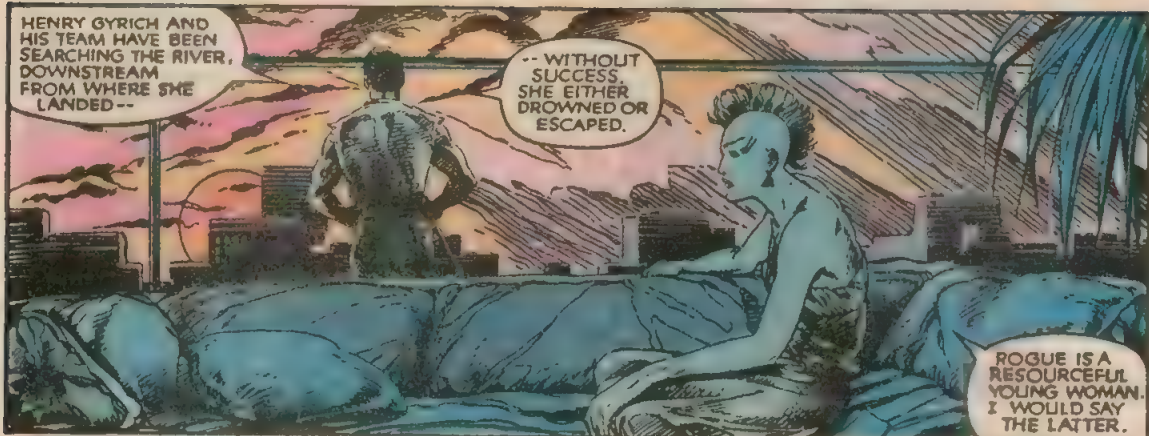


DALLAS, TEXAS...



EAGLE PLAZA...

FORGE, IS THERE ANY WORD OF ROGUE?



HENRY GYRICH AND HIS TEAM HAVE BEEN SEARCHING THE RIVER, DOWNSTREAM FROM WHERE SHE LANDED--

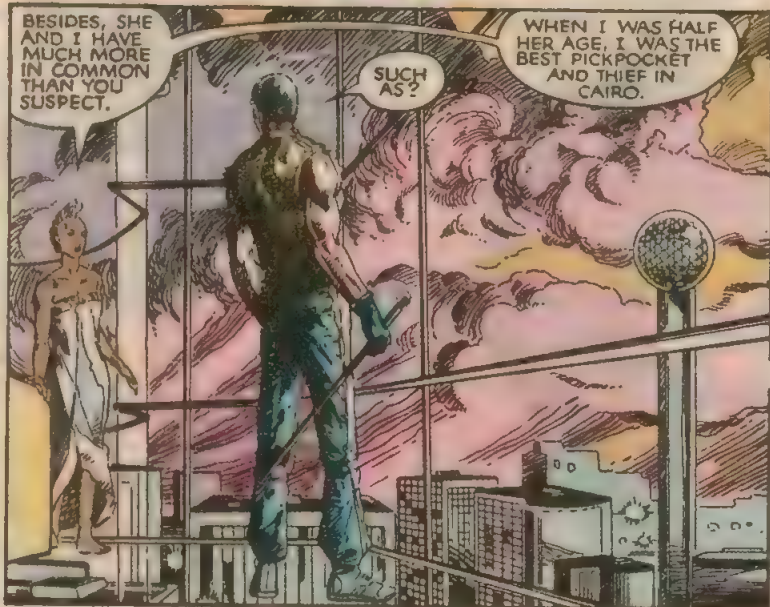
-- WITHOUT SUCCESS. SHE EITHER DROWNED OR ESCAPED.

ROGUE IS A RESOURCEFUL YOUNG WOMAN. I WOULD SAY THE LATTER.



WHAT BROUGHT THE TWO OF YOU TOGETHER, ANYWAY? SHE'S A CROOK, PART OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS.

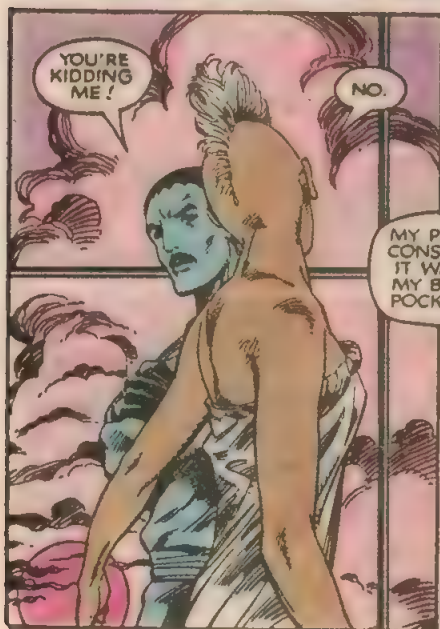
NO LONGER.



BESIDES, SHE AND I HAVE MUCH MORE IN COMMON THAN YOU SUSPECT.

SUCH AS?

WHEN I WAS HALF HER AGE, I WAS THE BEST PICKPOCKET AND THIEF IN CAIRO.



YOU'RE KIDDING ME!

NO.

MY PORTA-CONSOLE---! IT WAS IN MY BACK POCKET!

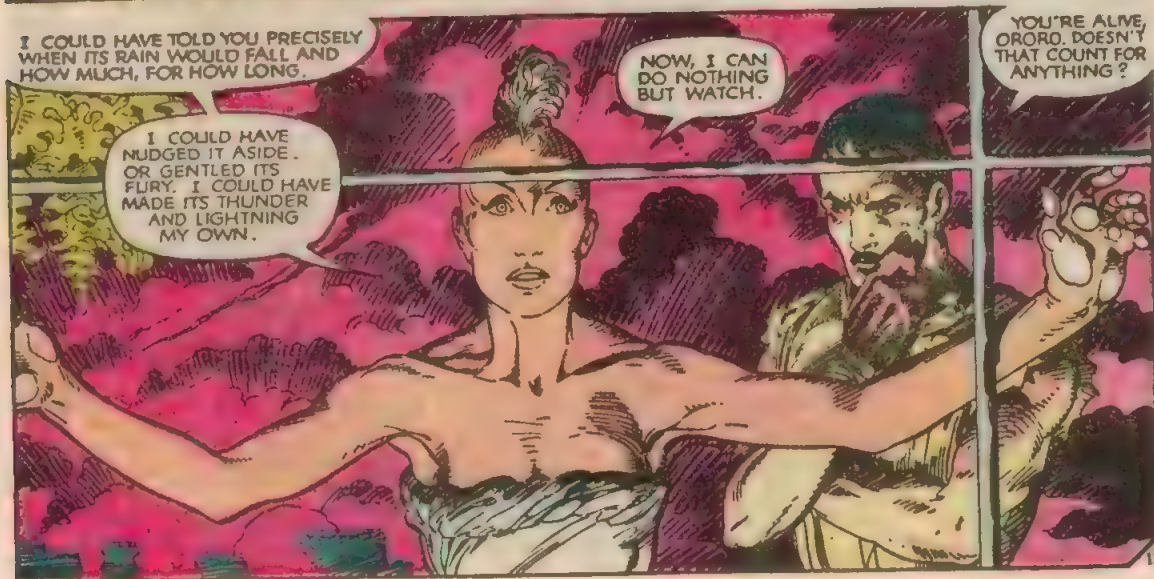
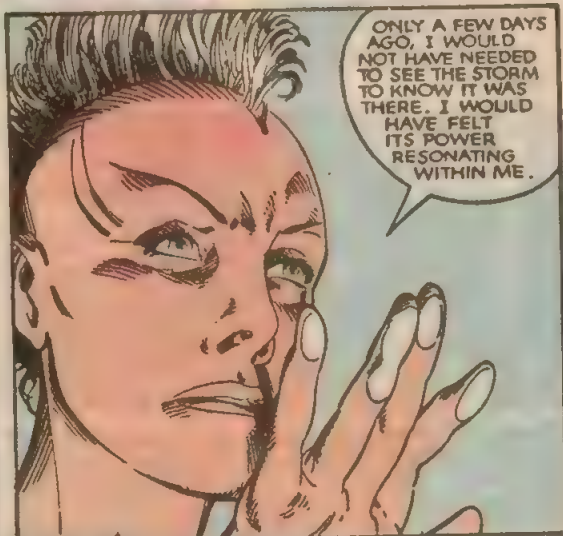
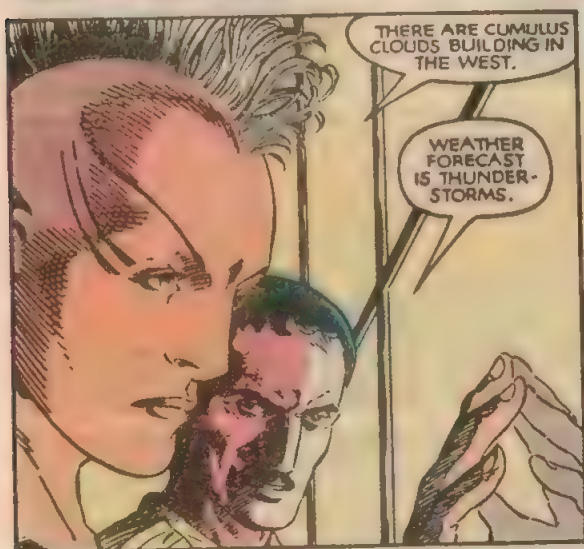
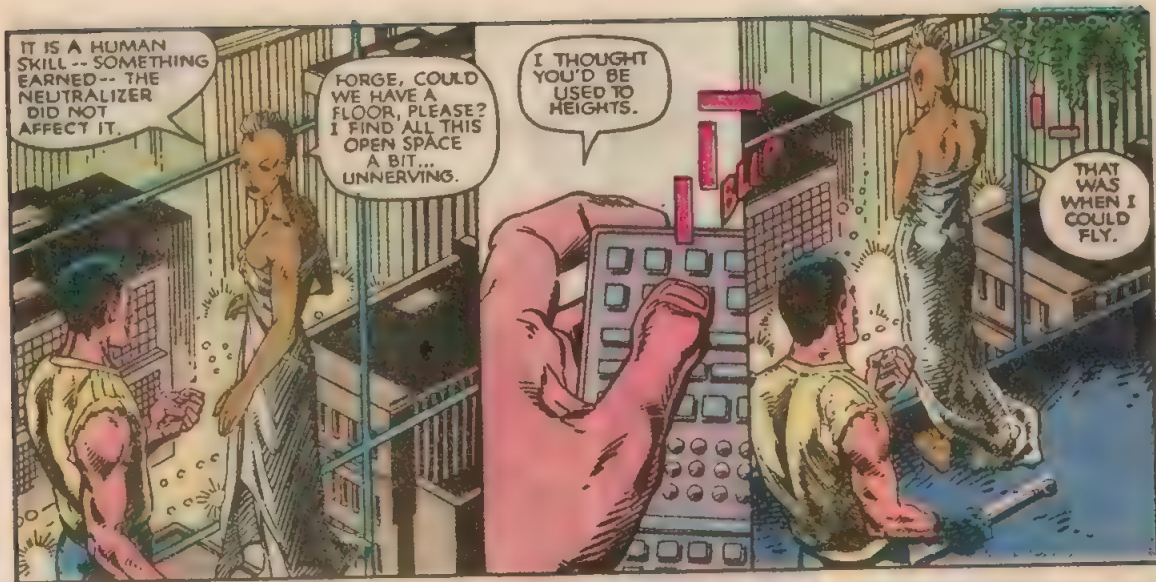


CHILD'S-PLAY.



YOU CERTAINLY HAVEN'T LOST YOUR TOUCH.

I SUPPOSE I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL.





THIS IS NOT LIFE,
FORGE, MERELY
EXISTENCE-- A SHADOW
OF WHAT WAS. TO
BELIEVE OTHERWISE IS
BUT THE CRUELEST
OF DECEPTIONS.



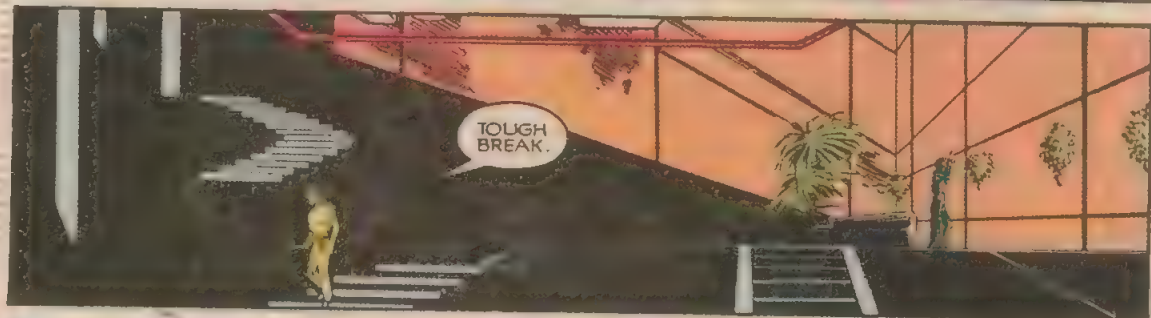
I WON'T
ACCEPT
THAT.



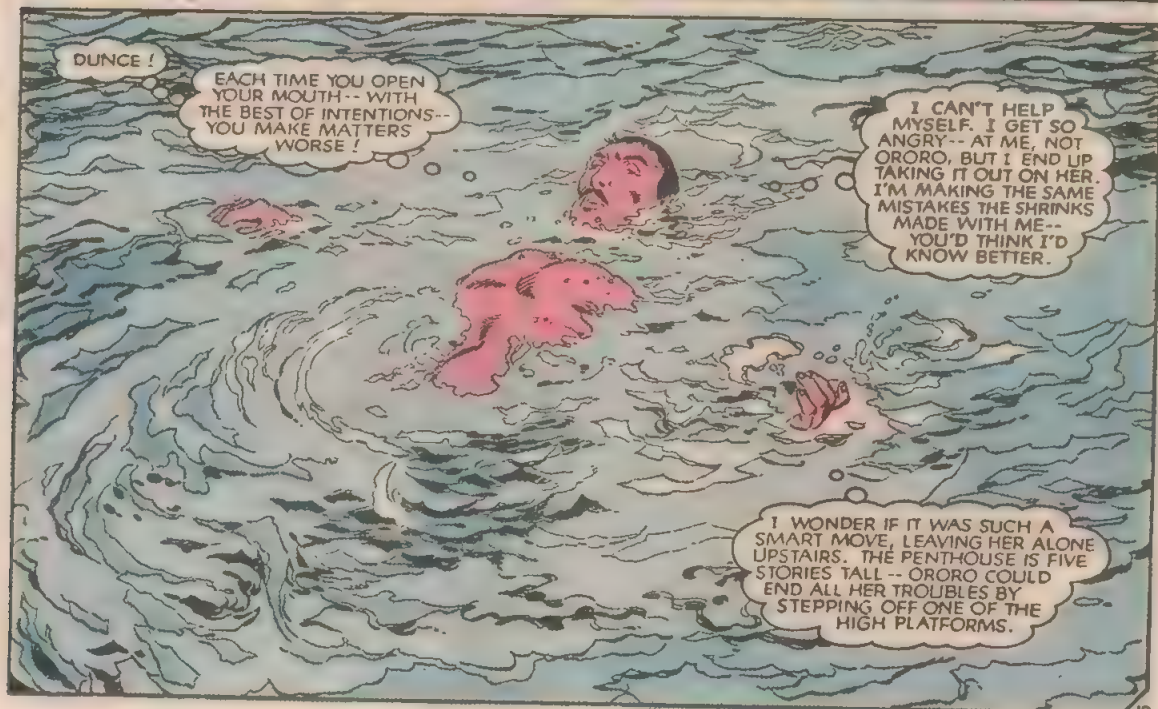
YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND--
HOW COULD YOU ?!

I COULD FLY! I WAS ONE
WITH ALL CREATION!

AND NOW YOU'VE
GOT TO WALK, LIKE
EVERYBODY ELSE.
THE GODDESS HAS
BECOME JUST
PLAIN FOLKS.



TOUGH
BREAK.

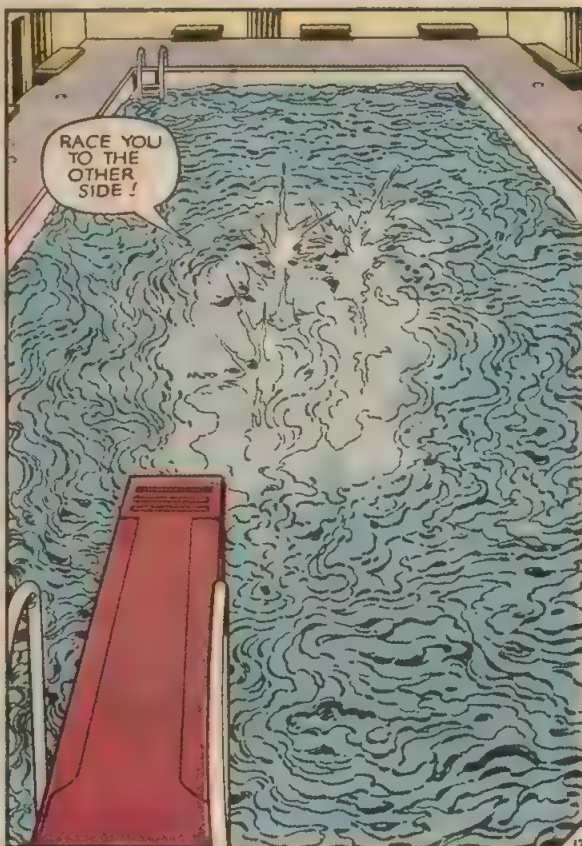
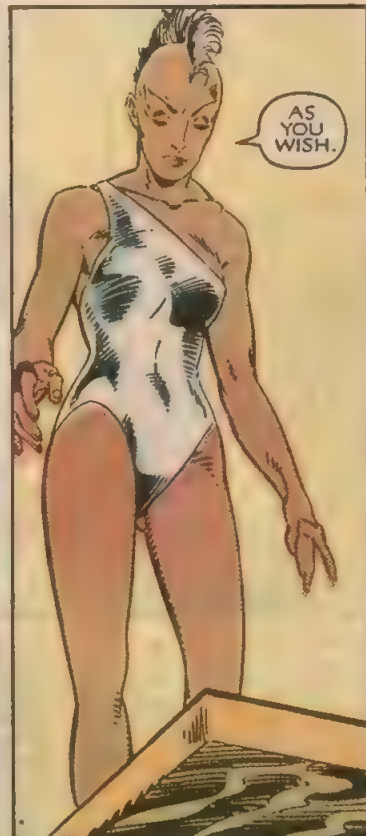


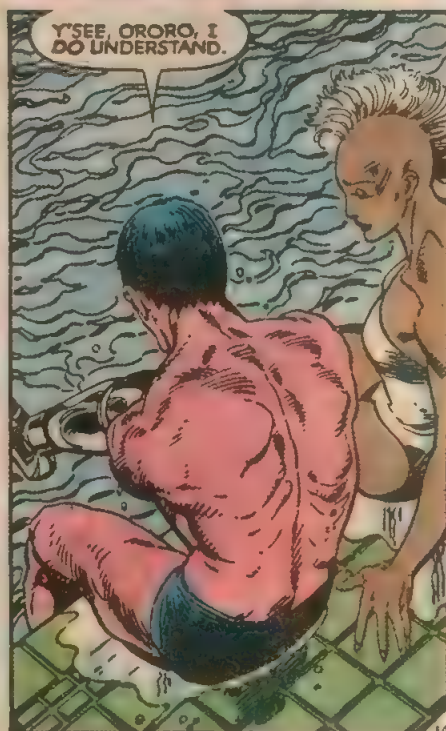
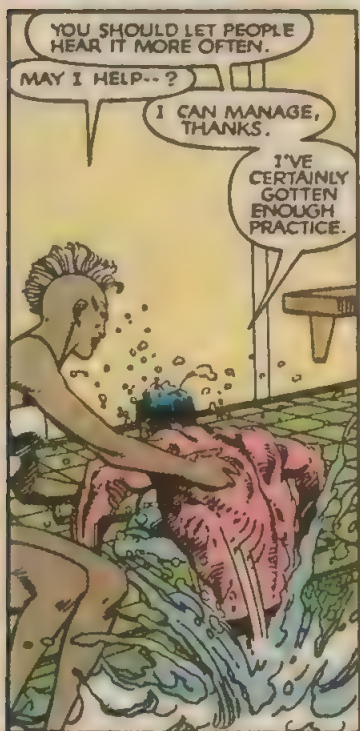
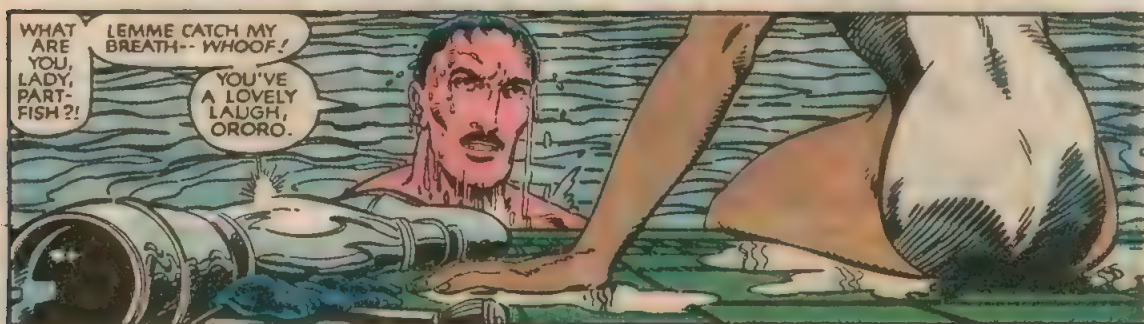
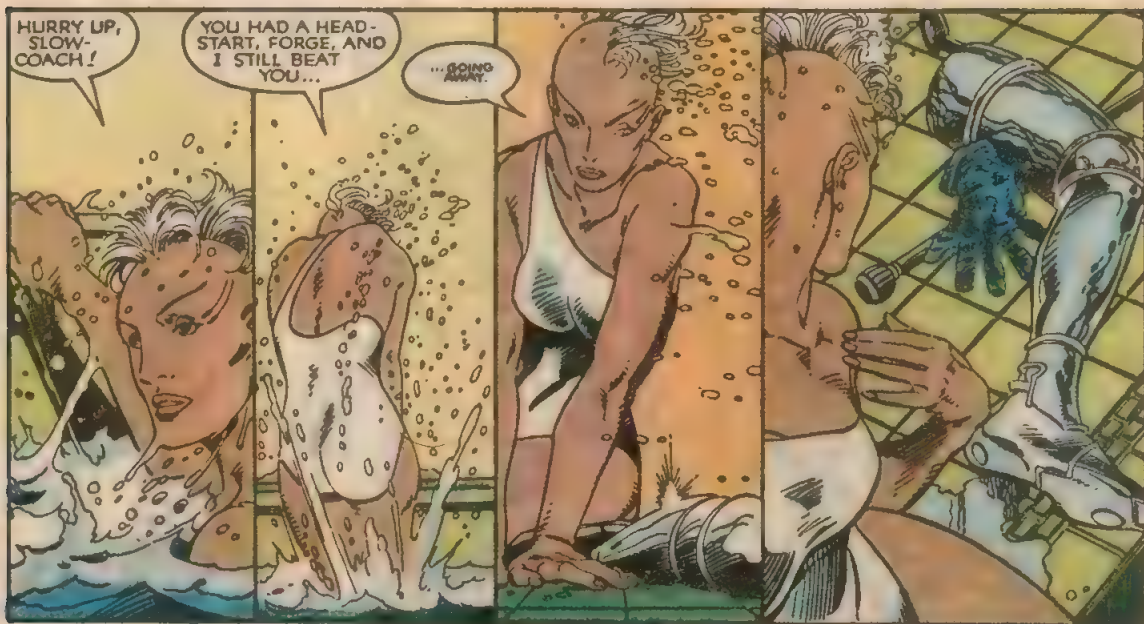
DUNCE !

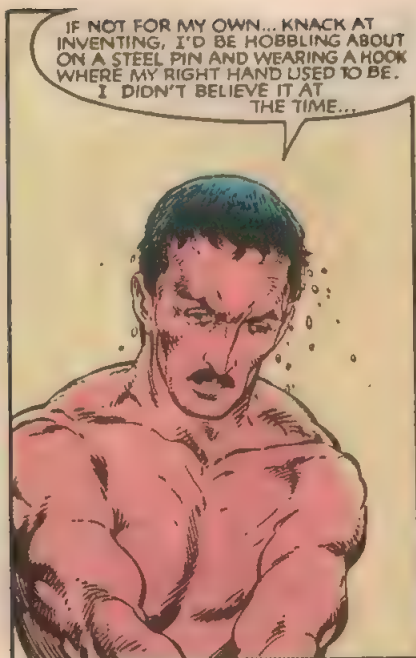
EACH TIME YOU OPEN
YOUR MOUTH-- WITH
THE BEST OF INTENTIONS--
YOU MAKE MATTERS
WORSE !

I CAN'T HELP
MYSELF. I GET SO
ANGRY-- AT ME, NOT
ORORO, BUT I END UP
TAKING IT OUT ON HER.
I'M MAKING THE SAME
MISTAKES THE SHRINKS
MADE WITH ME--
YOU'D THINK I'D
KNOW BETTER.

I WONDER IF IT WAS SUCH A
SMART MOVE, LEAVING HER ALONE
UPSTAIRS. THE PENTHOUSE IS FIVE
STORIES TALL -- ORORO COULD
END ALL HER TROUBLES BY
STEPPING OFF ONE OF THE
HIGH PLATFORMS.







IF NOT FOR MY OWN... KNAACK AT INVENTING, I'D BE HOBBLING ABOUT ON A STEEL PIN AND WEARING A HOOK WHERE MY RIGHT HAND USED TO BE. I DIDN'T BELIEVE IT AT THE TIME...



...BUT I'M A LOT LUCKIER THAN MOST. TOO MANY BUDDIES CAME BACK UNABLE TO WALK AT ALL-- SOME EVEN TO MOVE--OR THEY CAME HOME IN BOXES.



HOME FROM WHERE?

THE WAR. VIETNAM.

WHAT HAPPENED?

I GOT TOO CLOSE TO A BOMB...



...OR MAYBE, NOT CLOSE ENOUGH-- DEPENDS ON YOUR POINT OF VIEW.

AT THE TIME, I WANTED TO DIE-- I WAS PRETTY DETERMINED, TOO. I TRIED TO DO THE JOB MYSELF.



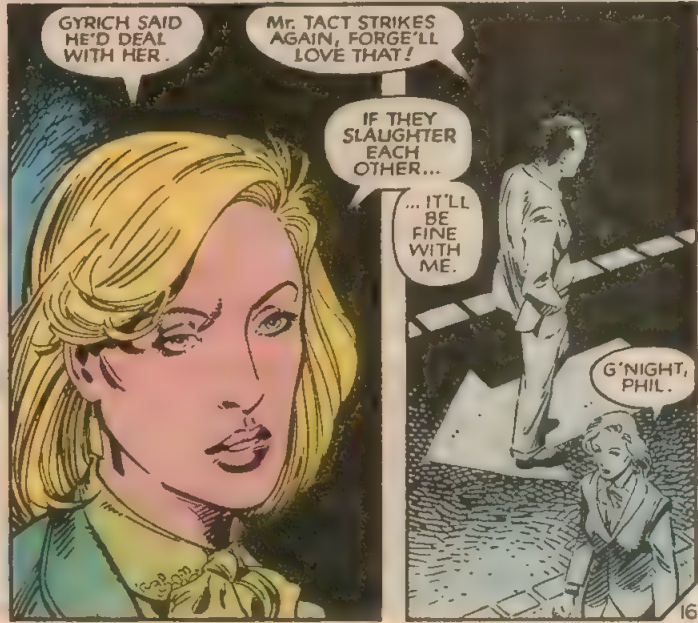
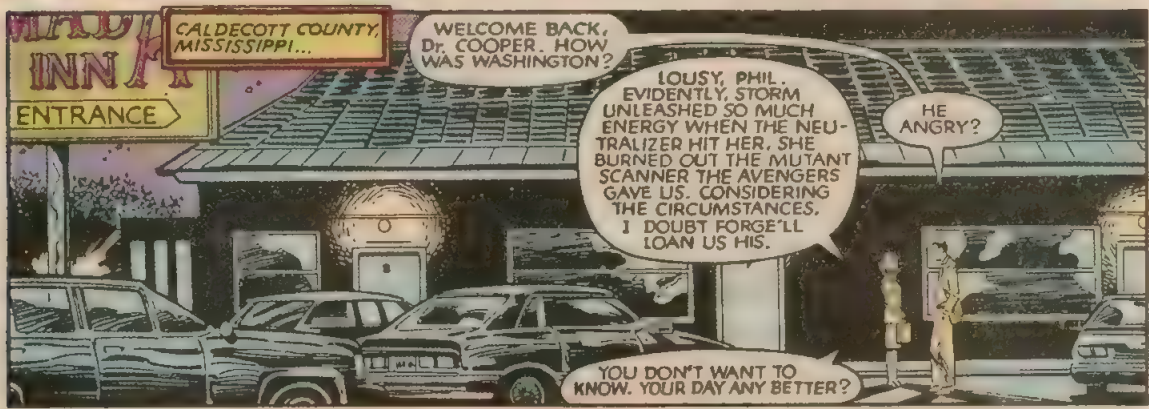
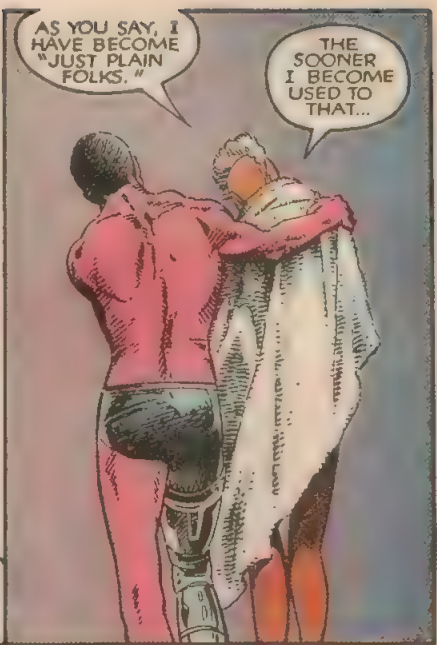
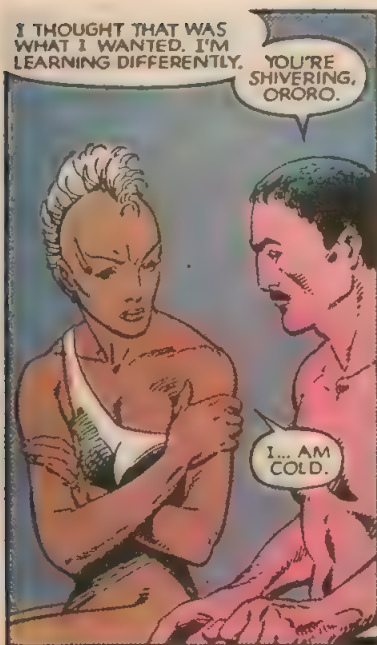
NO LUCK, THOUGH. I'M STILL HERE.

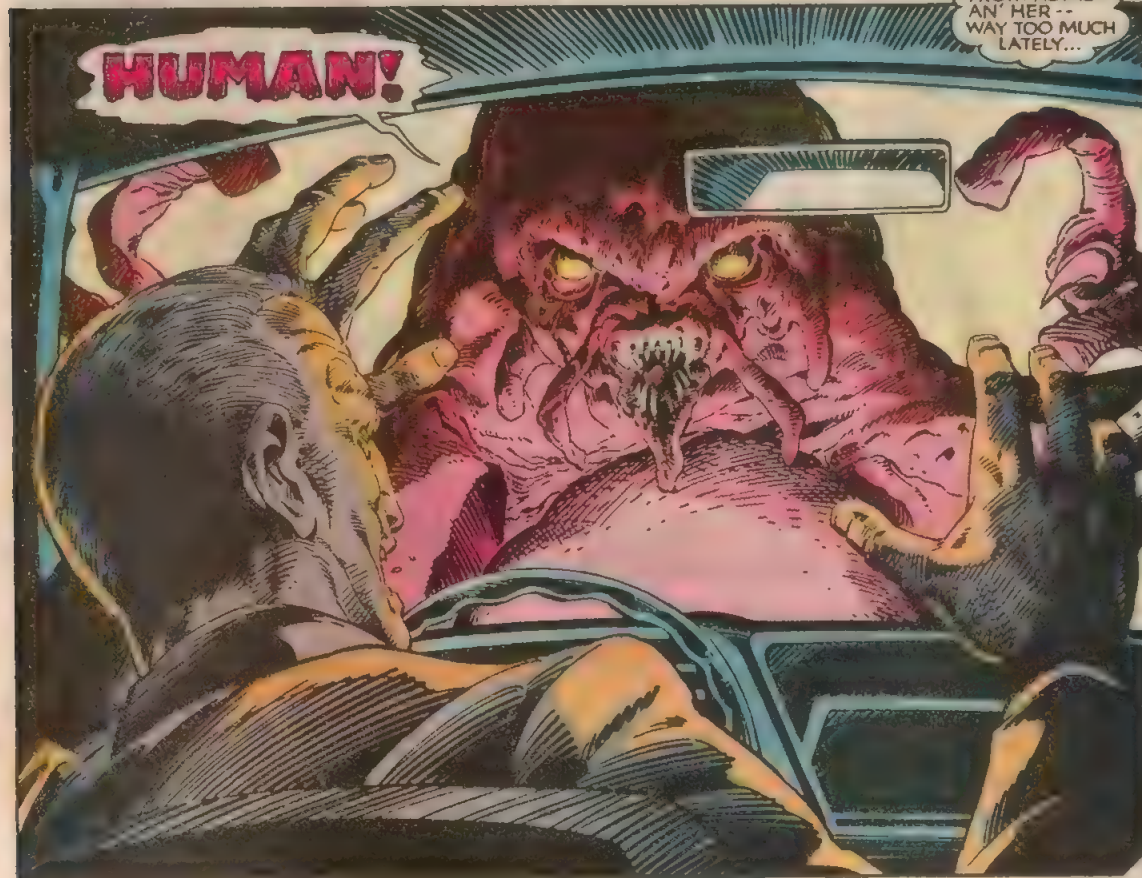


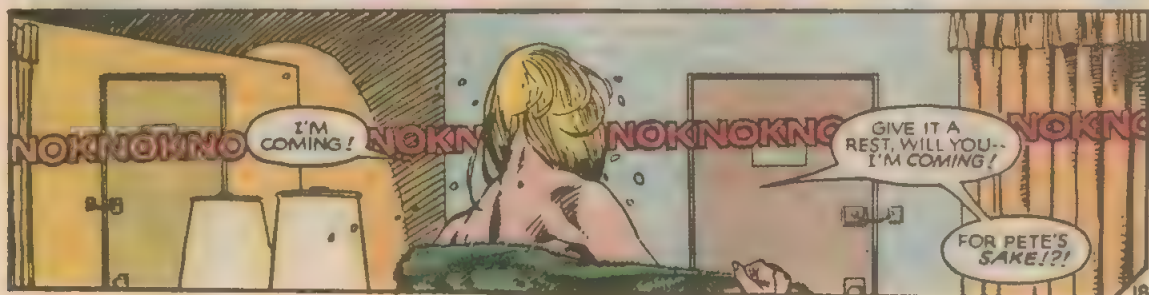
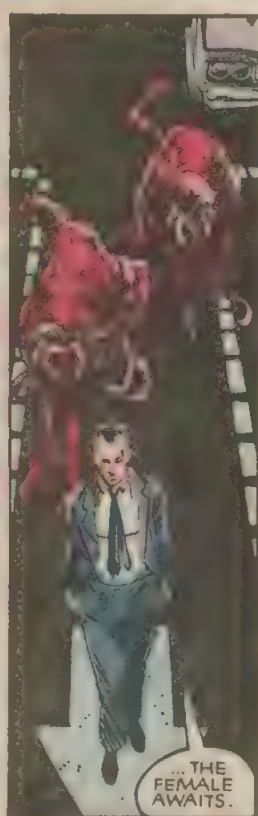
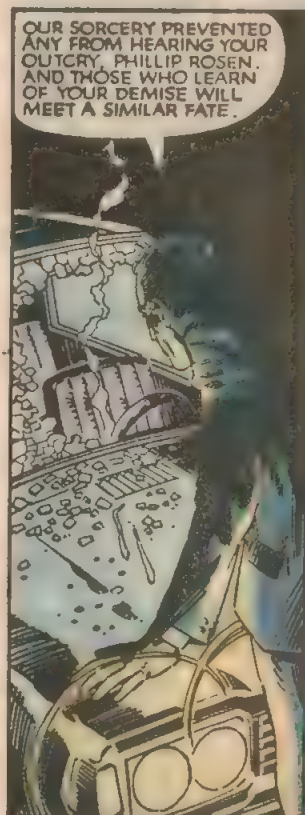
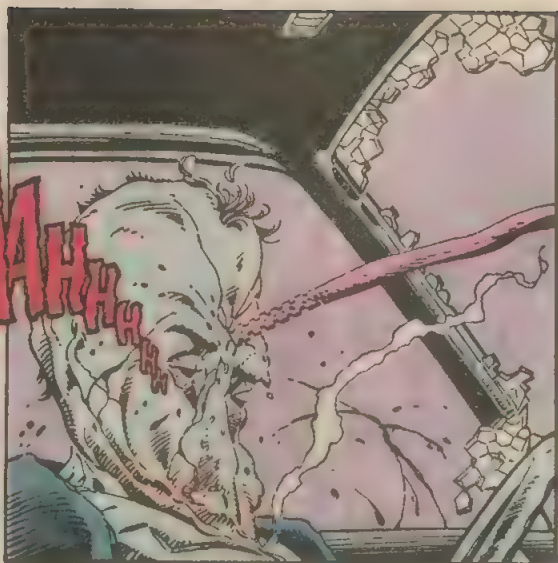
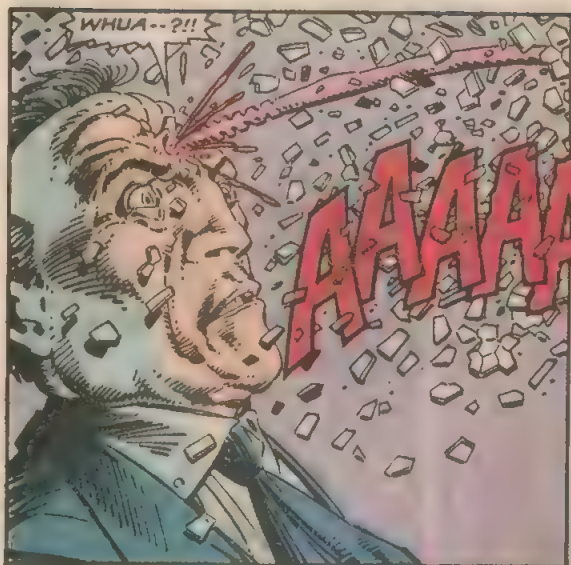
YET YOU TRIED TO DENY ME THE SAME ESCAPE.

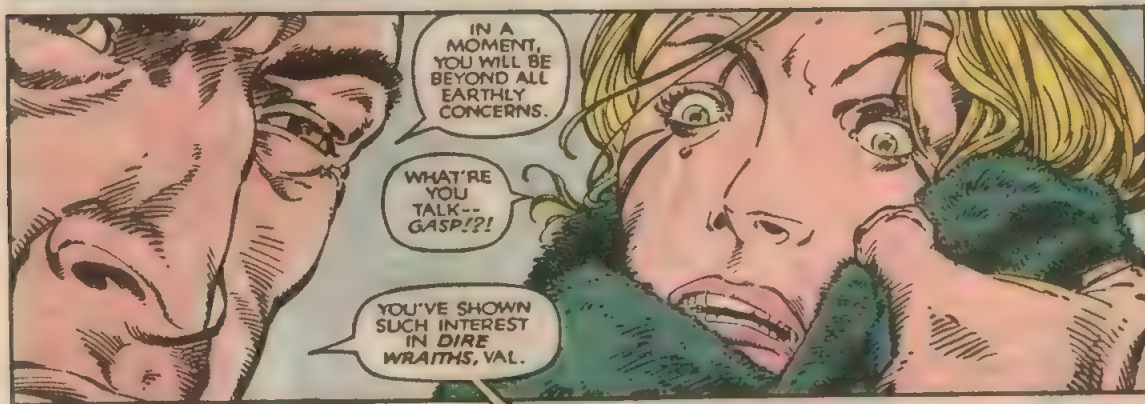
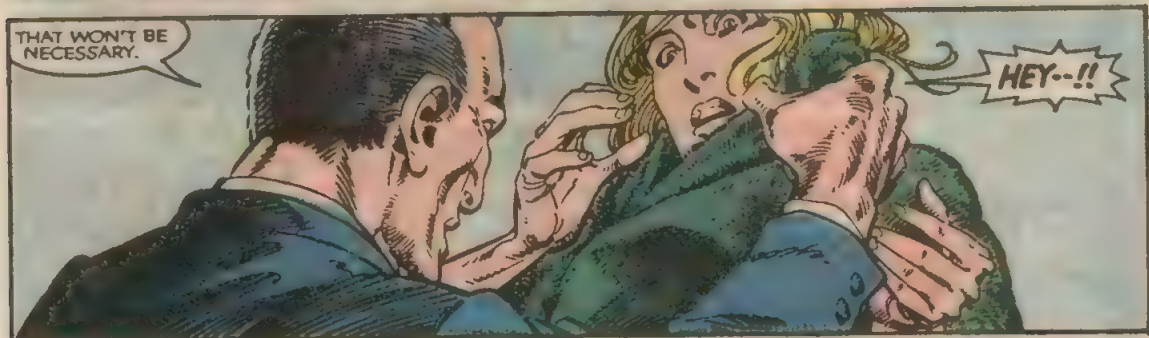
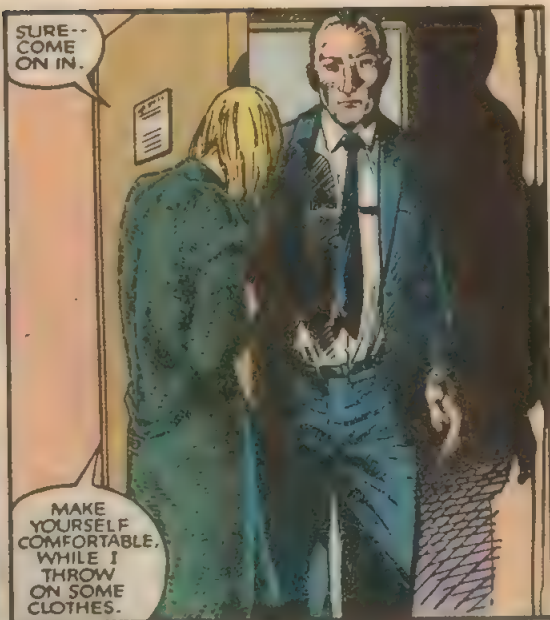
WITH LIFE, THERE ARE ALWAYS OPTIONS, POSSIBILITIES-- HOPE. YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT'LL HAPPEN NEXT-- FOR BETTER OR WORSE.

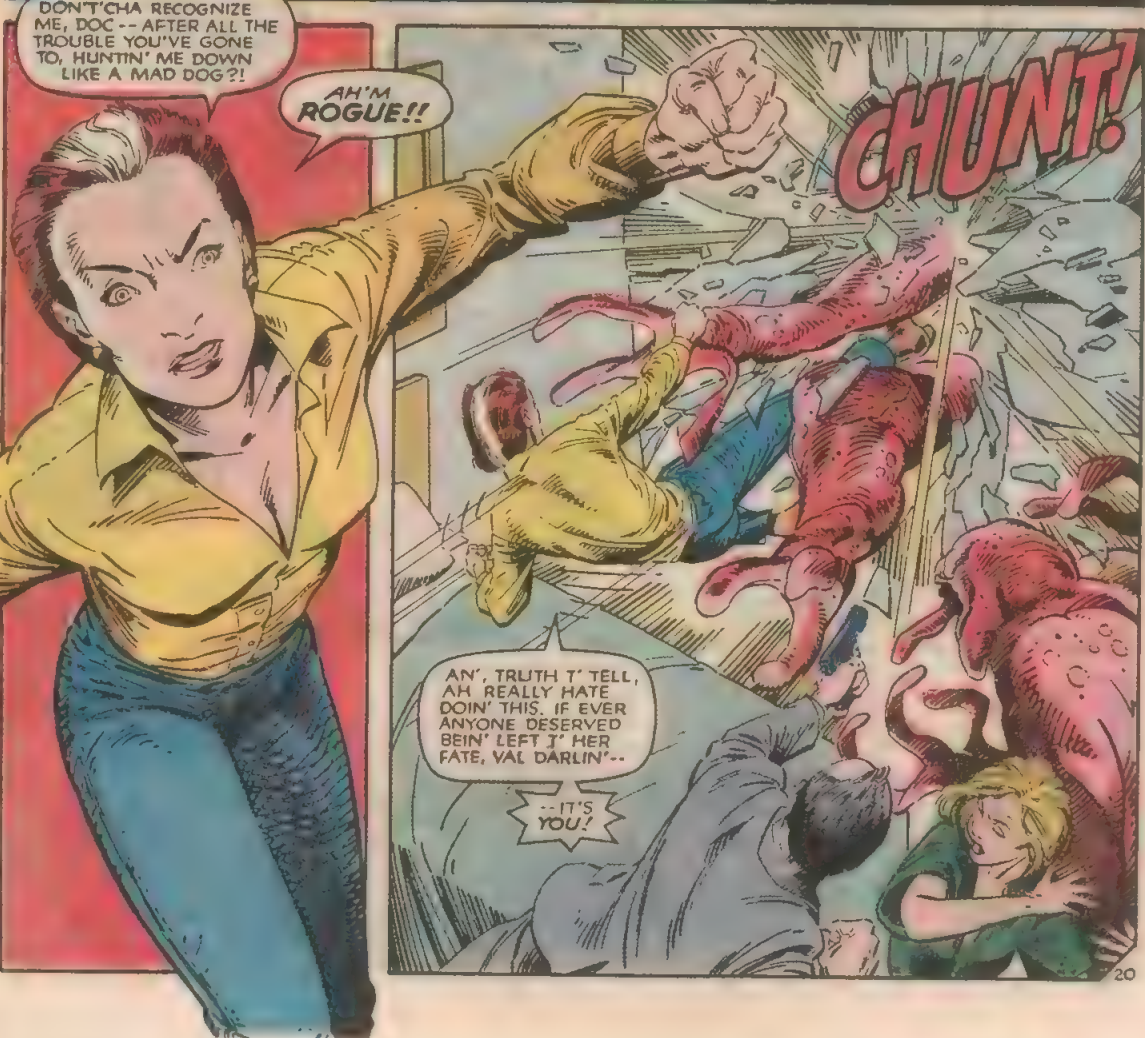
DEATH MAY BE CERTAIN, BUT IT'S ALSO FINAL. ONCE DONE, IT'S DONE-- THERE'RE NO SECOND THOUGHTS, NO GOING BACK.

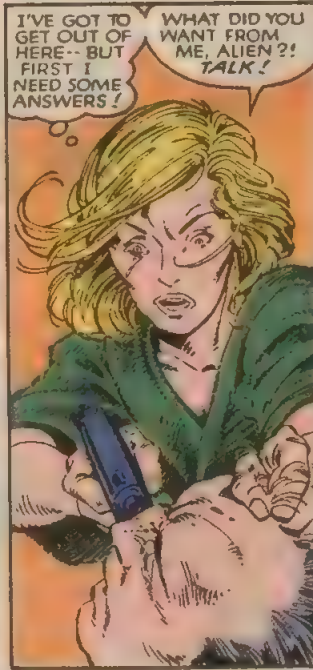
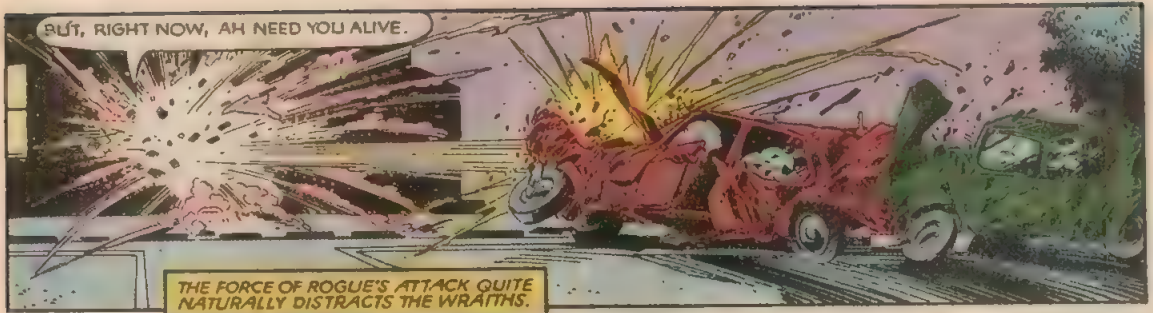


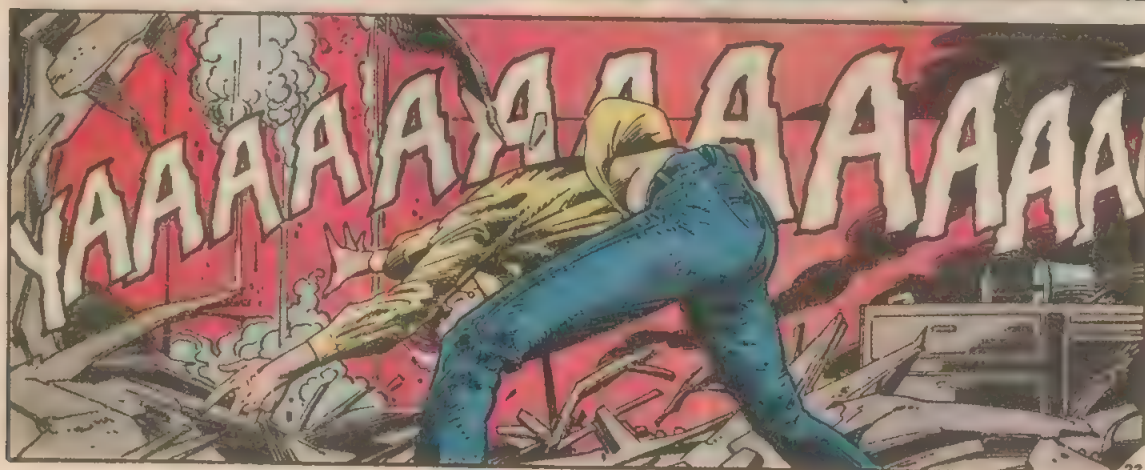
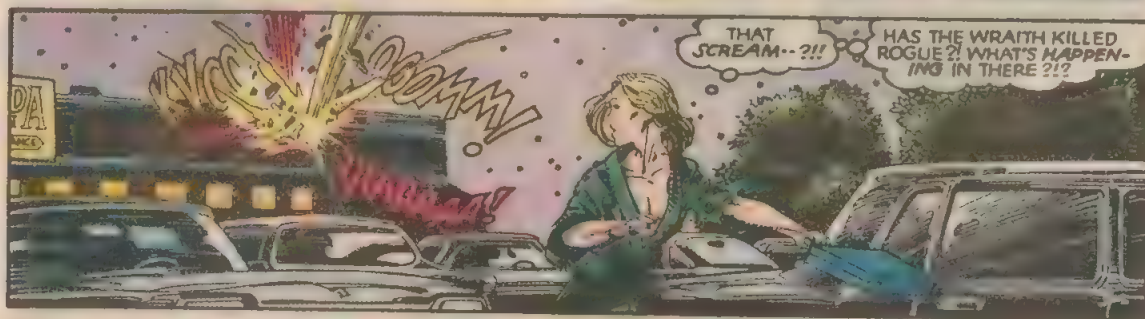
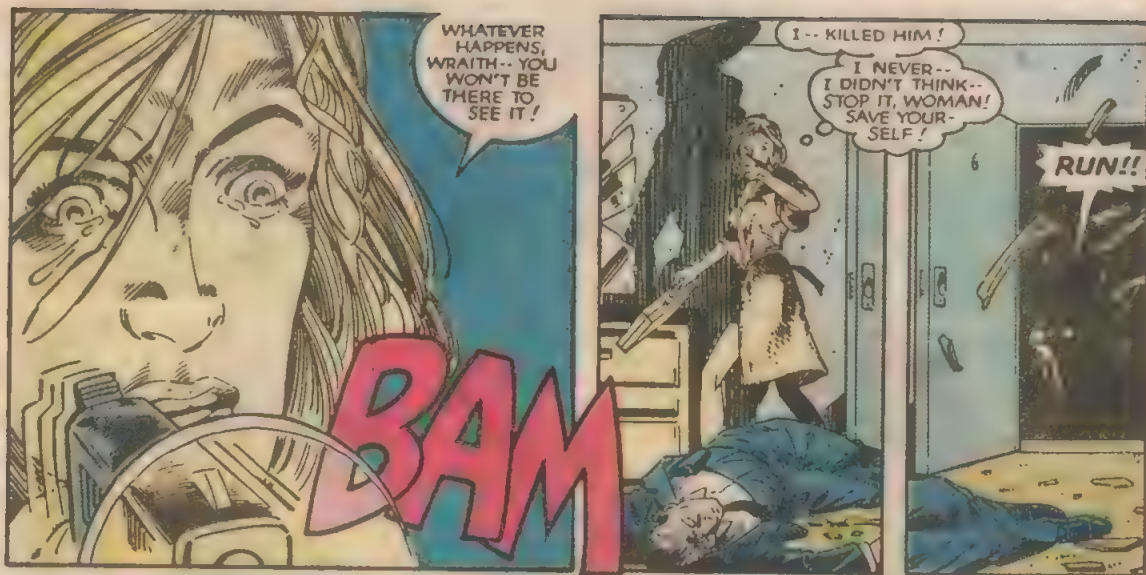


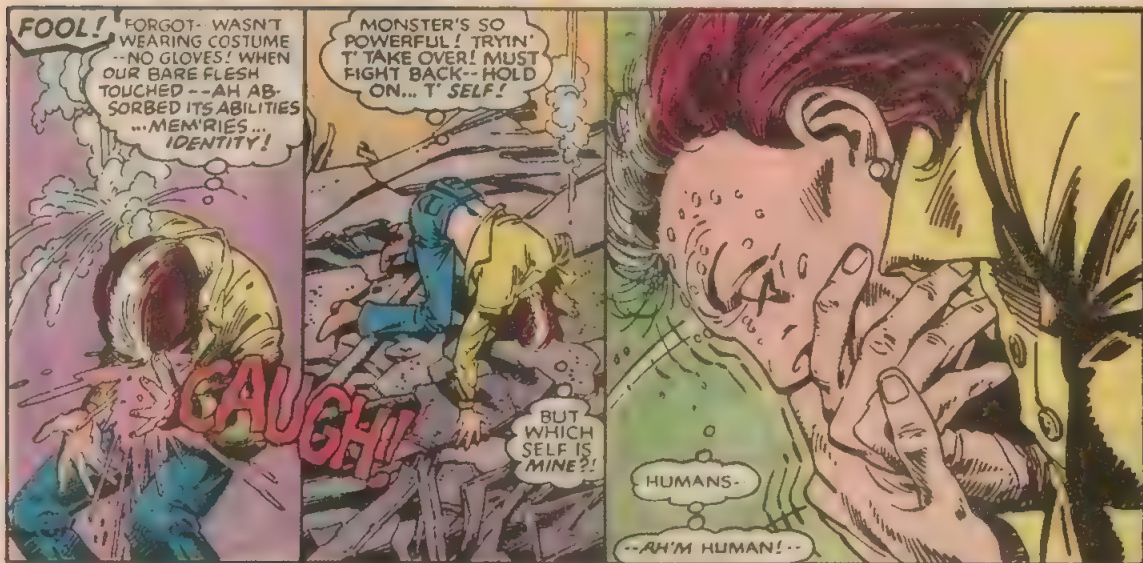








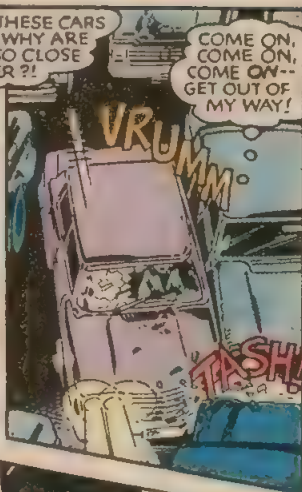






I'D BETTER
ASSUME THE
WORST!

WHERE'D ALL THESE CARS
COME FROM?! WHY ARE
THEY PARKED SO CLOSE
TOGETHER?!



COME ON,
COME ON,
COME ON--
GET OUT OF
MY WAY!



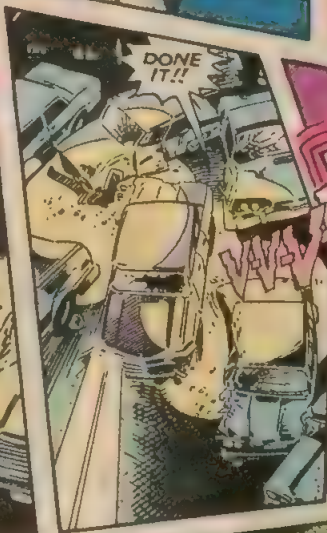
YOU IN THE
LOT-- HALT!

NO!
I'VE GOT
TO KEEP
GOING!

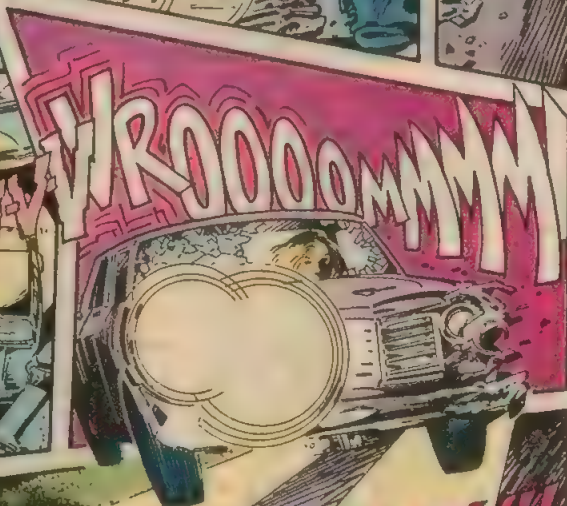
A LITTLE
MORE
ROOM...



...AND I'M
CLEAR!

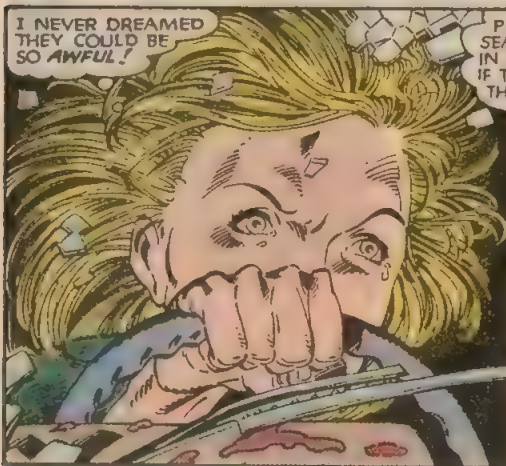


DONE
IT!!

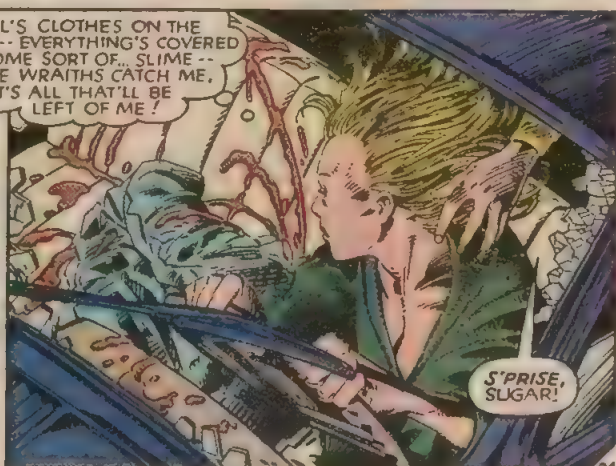


BUT WHERE DO I GO,
WHAT'LL I DO?!

THE REPORTS-- EVEN THE FILMS-- ABOUT THE WRAITHS WERE SO CLINICAL.

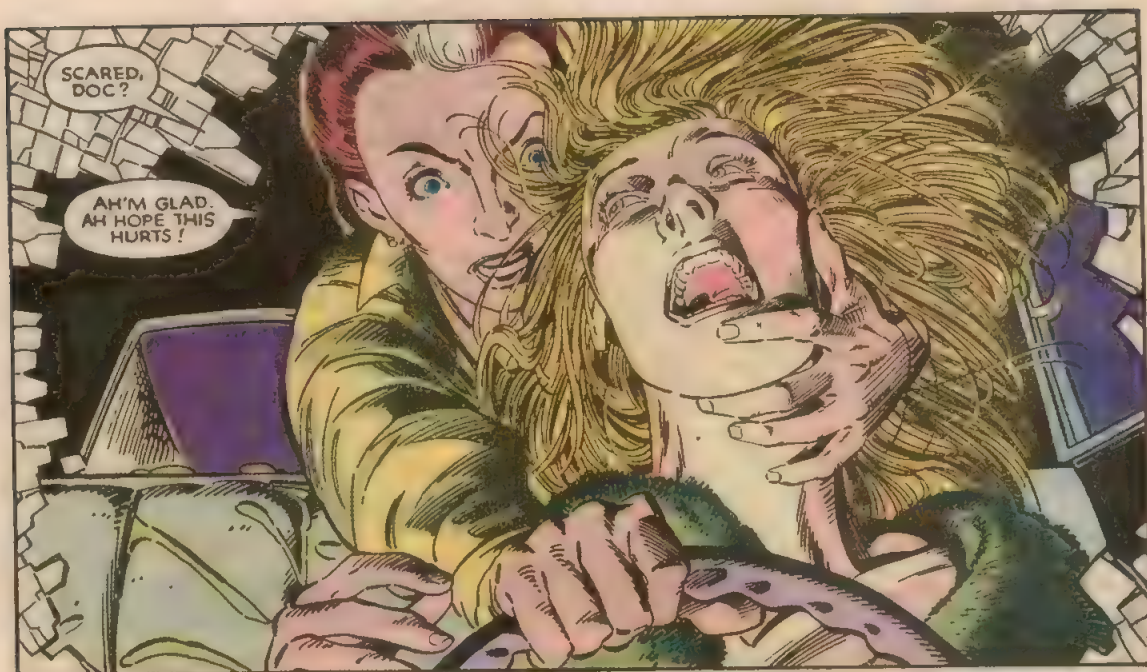


I NEVER DREAMED
THEY COULD BE
SO AWFUL!



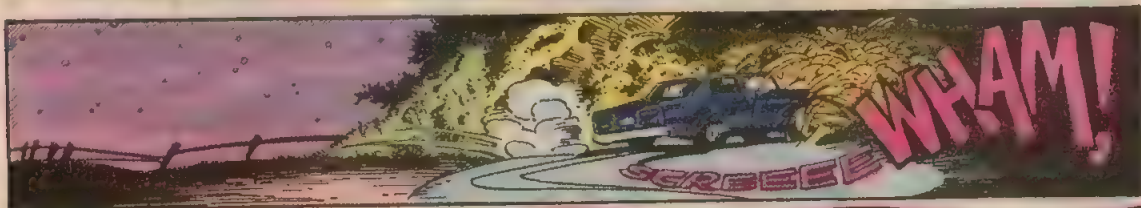
PHIL'S CLOTHES ON THE
SEAT-- EVERYTHING'S COVERED
IN SOME SORT OF... SLIME--
IF THE WRAITHS CATCH ME,
THAT'S ALL THAT'LL BE
LEFT OF ME!

S'PRISE,
SUGAR!

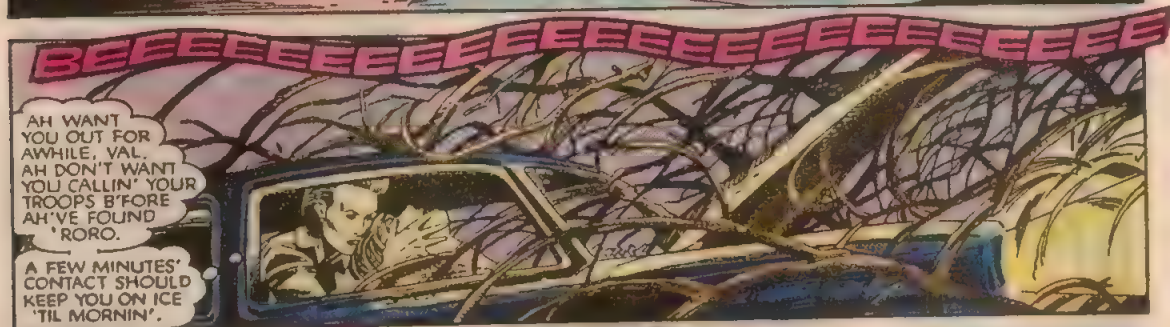


SCARED, DOC?

AH'M GLAD. AH HOPE THIS HURTS!



WHAM!



AH WANT YOU OUT FOR AWHILE, VAL. AH DON'T WANT YOU CALLIN' YOUR TROOPS B'FORE AH'VE FOUND 'RORO.

A FEW MINUTES' CONTACT SHOULD KEEP YOU ON ICE 'TIL MORNIN'.

UGH-- MY WRAITH-SELF KEEPS EXPECTIN' YOU TO DISINTEGRATE-- EATIN' BRAINS REALLY TURNS THESE YUCKOS ON. THANK HEAVEN ITS PRESENCE IS ALREADY STARTIN' TO FADE.

THINGS'RE SETTLIN' DOWN-- AH'M MAKIN' SENSE OUT O' VAL'S THOUGHTS AN' MEM'RIES-- THERE'S A DUDE NAMED FORGE... AN INVENTOR, HE MAKES STUFF FOR THE GOVERNMENT...

... BUT WHAT'S HIS CONNECTION-- NO! NO!



IT CAN'T BE TRUE-- THAT CAN'T BE WHAT HAPPENED--
IT WAS ME YOU WANTED, WHY'D YOU HAVE TO HURT STORM?!!

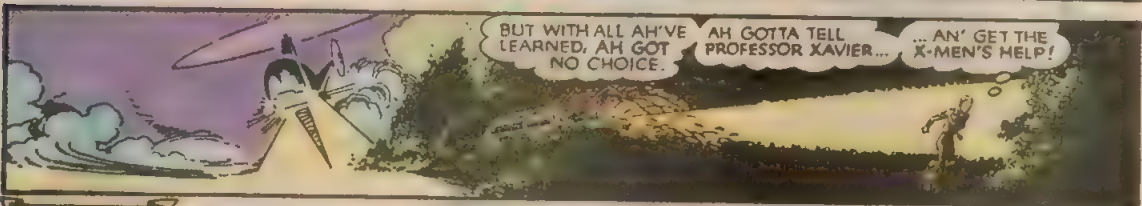
YOU BETTER
PRAY SHE'S
ALL RIGHT,
DOC.



OR YOU'LL
BE SEEIN'
ME AGAIN!

CHAM!

ORORO GOT INTO THIS MESS 'CAUSE O' ME.
AH WANTED TO PULL HER OUT BY MYSELF.



BUT WITH ALL AH'VE
LEARNED, AH GOT
NO CHOICE.

AH GOTTA TELL
PROFESSOR XAVIER...

... AN' GET THE
X-MEN'S HELP!



MEANWHILE...

WITH MY COSTUME
DESTROYED, I
HAVE NOTHING
TO WEAR...



... SO FORGE HAD
THESE CLOTHES
DELIVERED.



I
WONDER...



...WHAT
HE WILL
THINK?

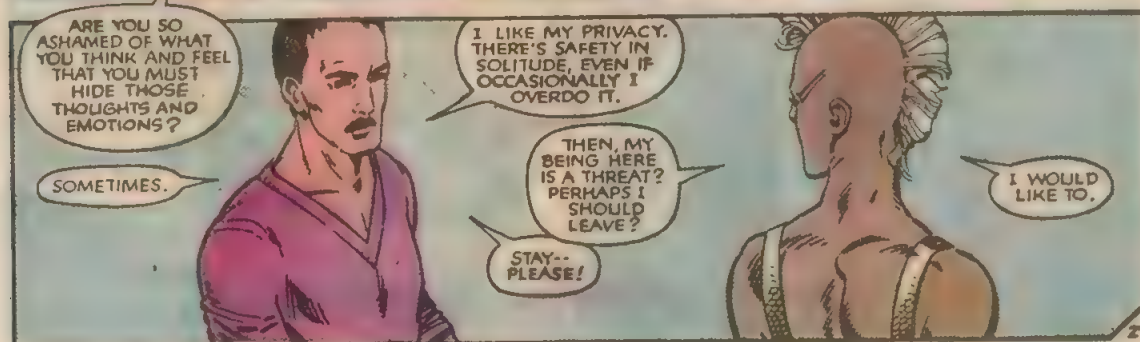
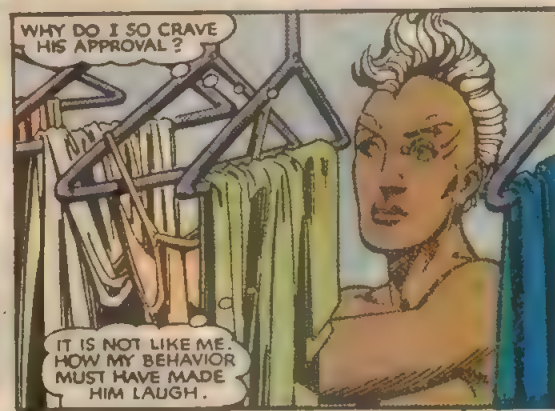
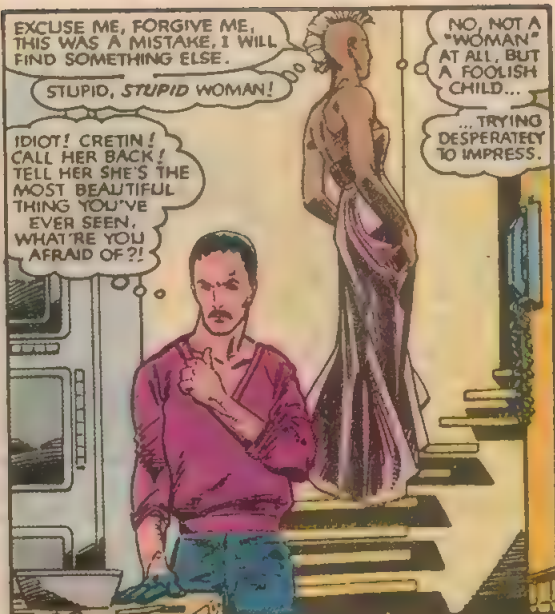
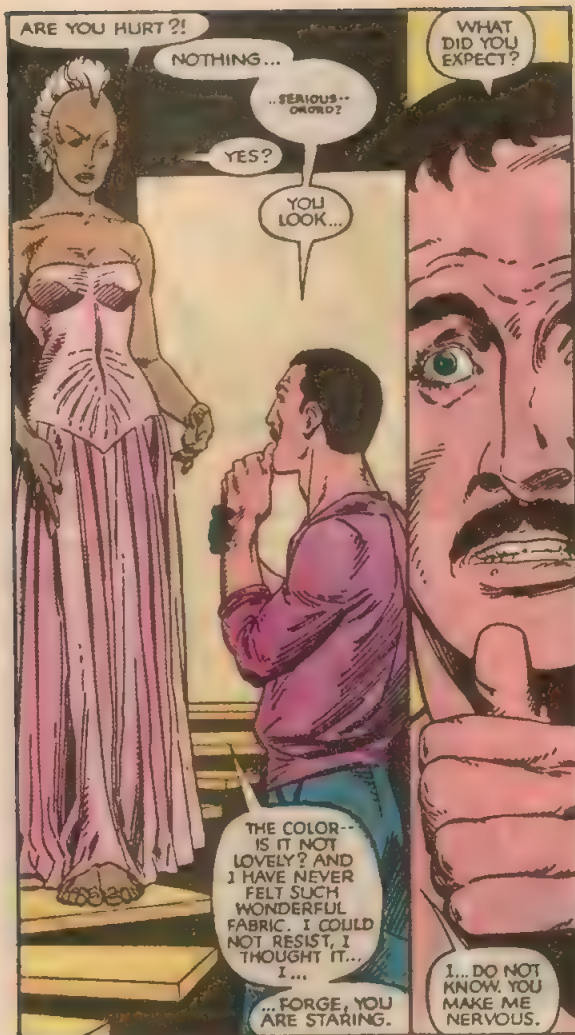


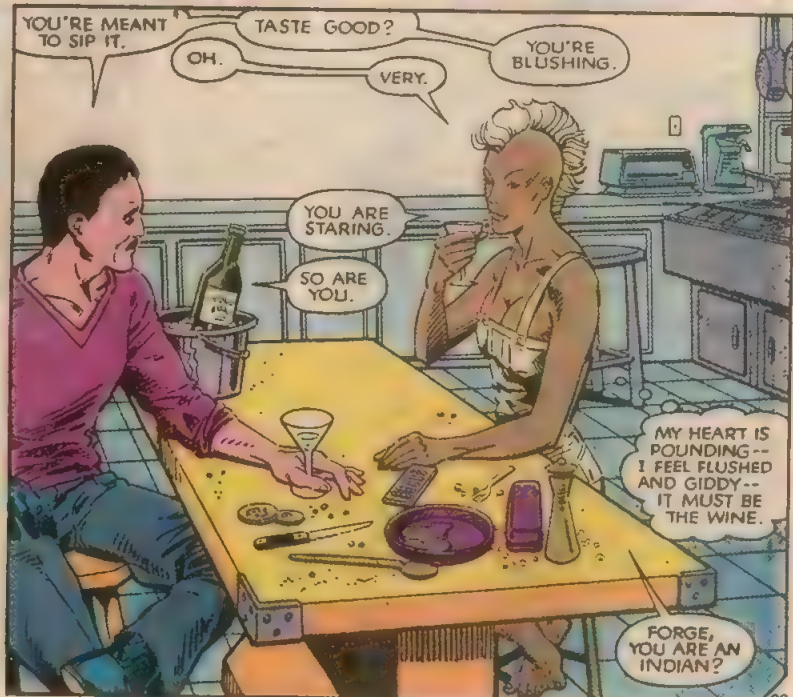
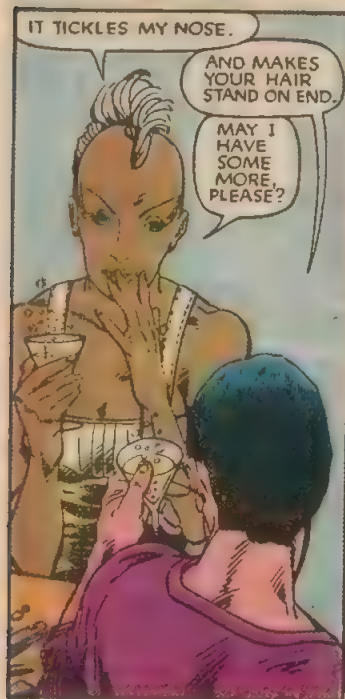
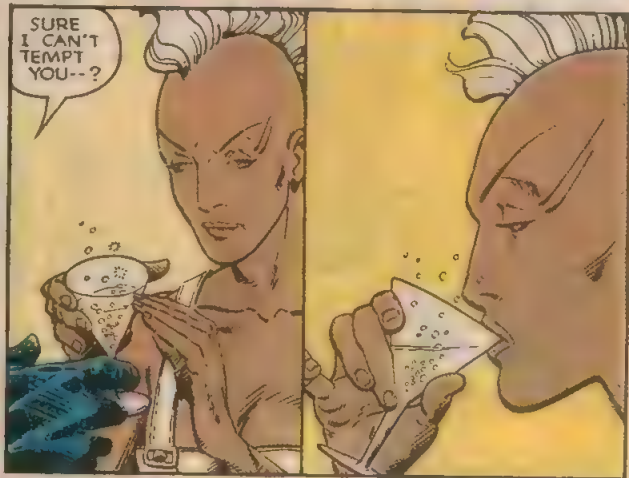
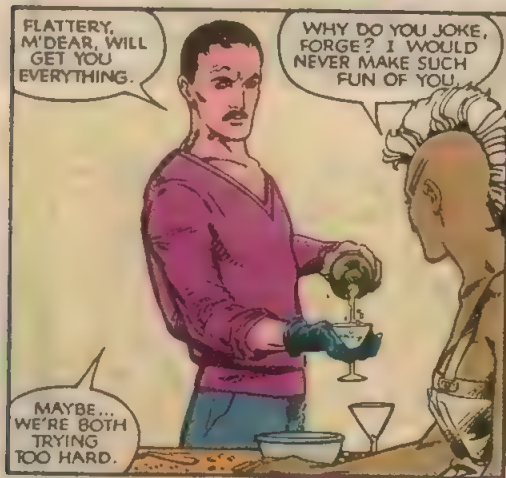
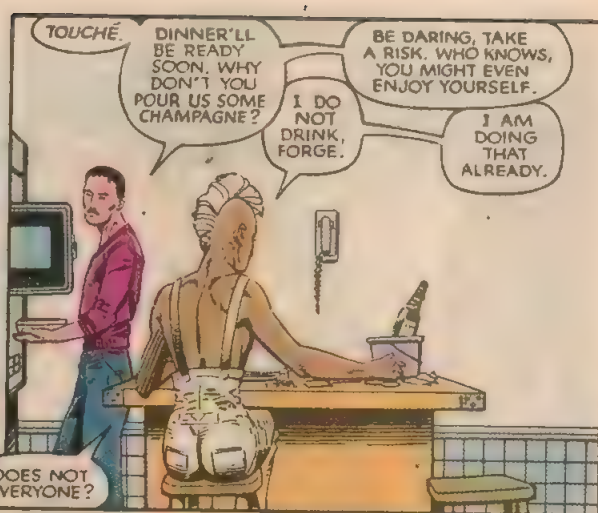
MAY I
HELP?

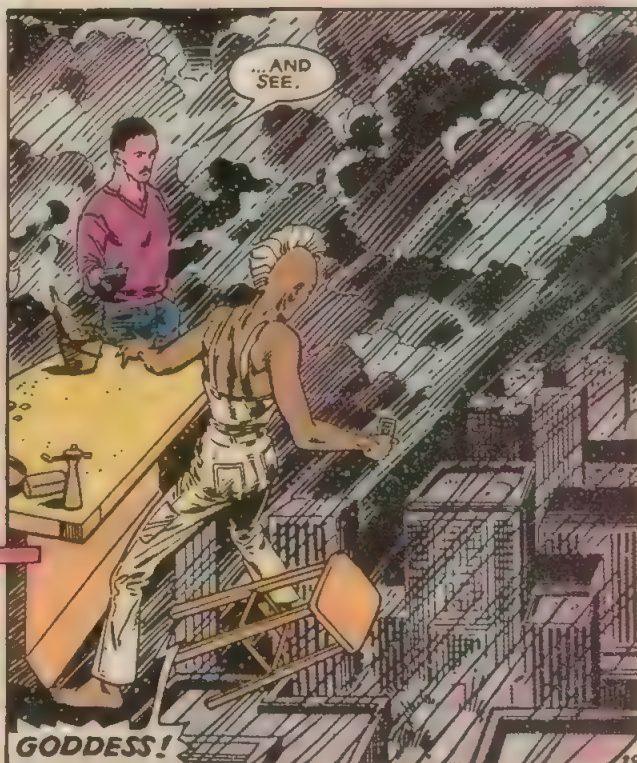
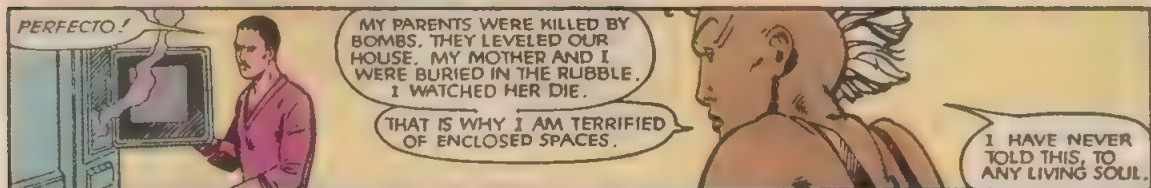
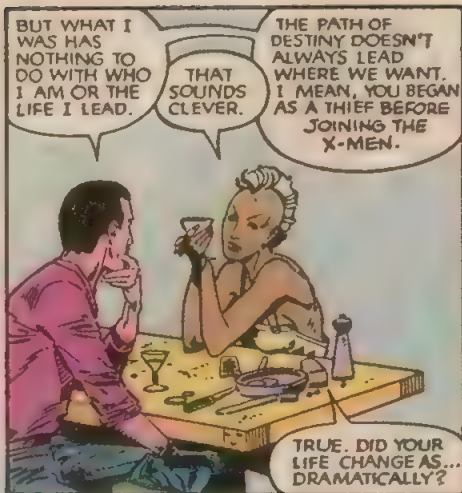
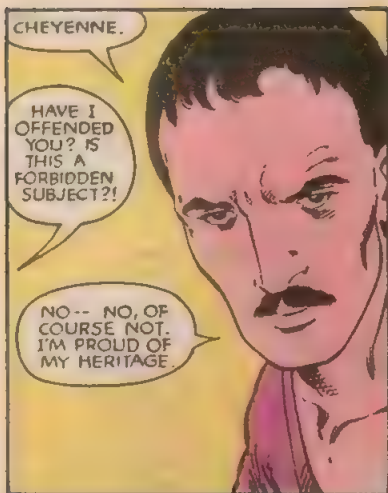
HMMH...

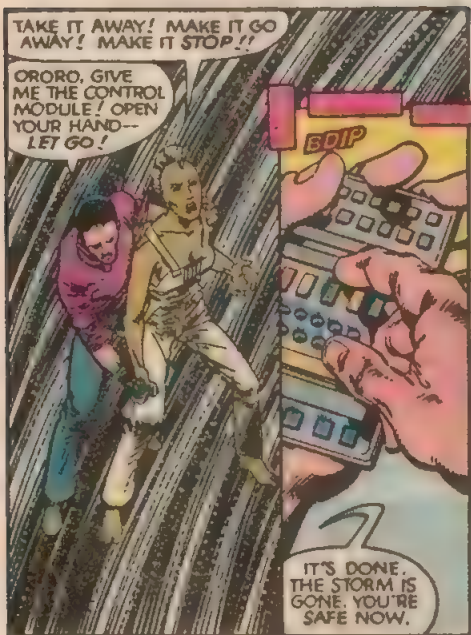
snik

OW!!!









TAKE IT AWAY! MAKE IT GO AWAY! MAKE IT STOP!!

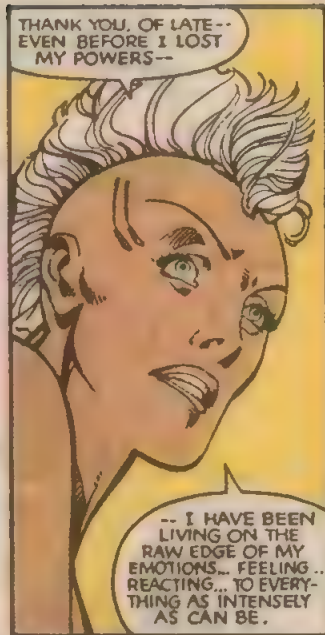
ORORO, GIVE ME THE CONTROL MODULE! OPEN YOUR HAND-- LET GO!

IT'S DONE. THE STORM IS GONE. YOU'RE SAFE NOW.



I FELT SO SMALL AND... INSIGNIFICANT... IN THE FACE OF THE STORM'S FURY-- OH, FORGE, I WAS SO AFRAID!

THIS'LL PASS, LOVE, YOU'LL COPE.



THANK YOU, OF LATE-- EVEN BEFORE I LOST MY POWERS--

-- I HAVE BEEN LIVING ON THE RAW EDGE OF MY EMOTIONS... FEELING... REACTING... TO EVERYTHING AS INTENSELY AS CAN BE.



THE FIRST LESSON I LEARNED-- AND A VERY HARSH ONE IT WAS, TOO--

--WAS THAT MY ELEMENTAL ABILITIES WERE BOUND UP WITH MY EMOTIONS. THE GREATER MY FEELINGS, THE MORE EXTREME THE ATMOSPHERIC RESPONSE.



TO PROTECT MYSELF, AND THOSE AROUND ME, I CULTIVATED AN ABSOLUTE SERENITY OF MIND AND BODY, SO MUCH THAT I LOST VIRTUALLY ALL AWARENESS OF MYSELF AS A WOMAN.



A FEW MONTHS AGO, I CAST AWAY THOSE RESTRAINTS. I COULD NO LONGER ENDURE MY SELF-ENFORCED SPIRITUAL CELIBACY...

... SO I REBELLED.

I CUT MY HAIR, CHANGED MY CLOTHES-- LIKE YOU, I DENIED AS COMPLETELY AS I COULD MY OLD WORLD AND SELF AND BELIEFS.

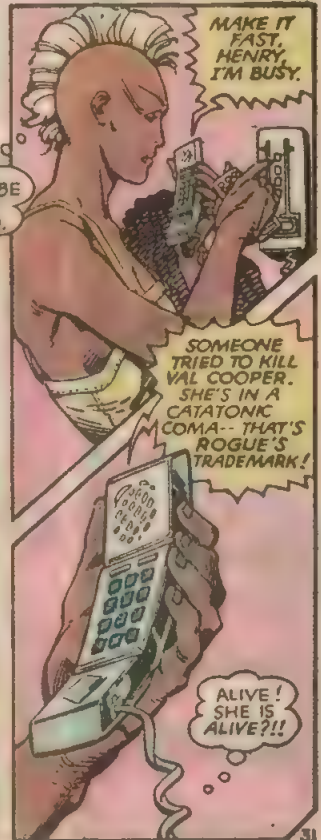
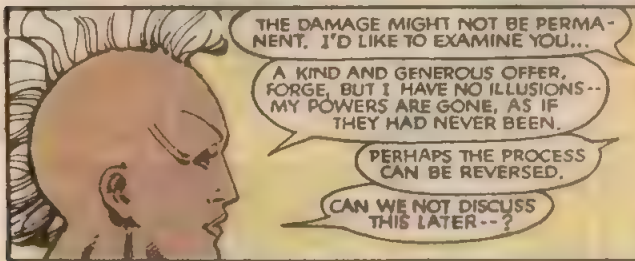
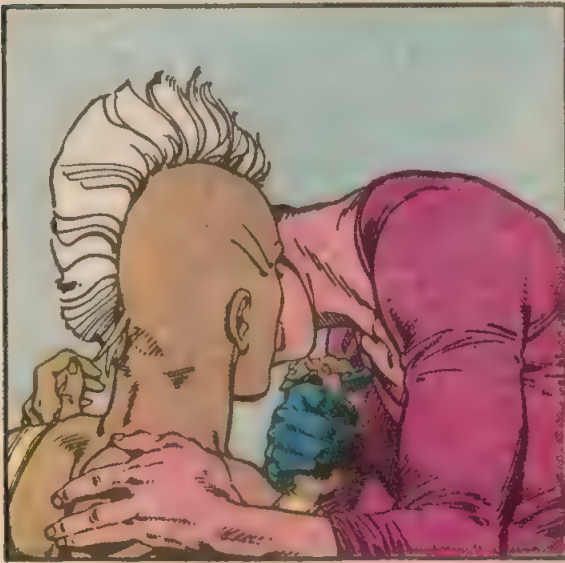


NOW-- WHAT IRONY-- THE PROBLEM NO LONGER EXISTS. I NEED NOT FEAR MY FEELINGS, FOR THE ONLY PERSON AFFECTED-- THE ONLY ONE AT RISK--

--WILL BE ME.



NOT QUITE.



MUTIES-- ESPECIALLY THE X-MEN--
STICK TOGETHER. IF SHE LEARNED
STORM'S WHEREABOUTS FROM VAL,
YOU CAN BET SHE'S ON HER WAY!

WE WANT STORM SHIFTED
TO A FEDERAL FACILITY.

I TOLD YOU
BEFORE,
GYRICH...

...I'M
BEST
EQUIPPED
TO CARE
FOR HER. SHE
TRUSTS ME.

YOU'RE
EMOTIONALLY
INVOLVED--!

THAT'S RIGHT!
YOU PULLED
THE TRIGGER--
YOU SHOT
STORM--BUT
I DESIGNED
THE GUN!

NO!

WHAT WAS
THAT?!

FORGE?
WAS SOME-
BODY
ON THE
LINE?!
FORGE!?!


ORORO,
LET ME
EXPLAIN!

NEVER!

BECAUSE,
EVEN NOW, I
WANT WITH
ALL MY HEART
TO BELIEVE
YOU.

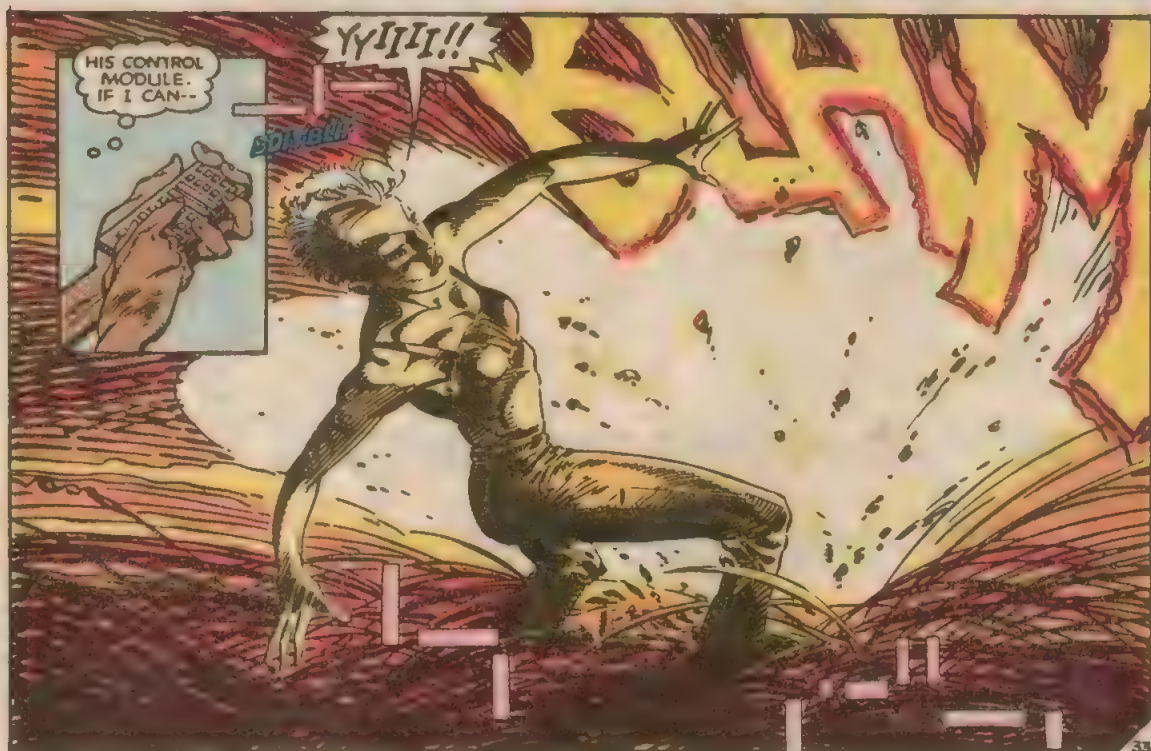
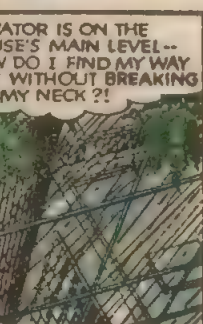
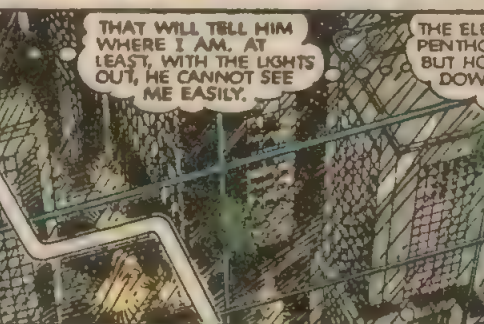
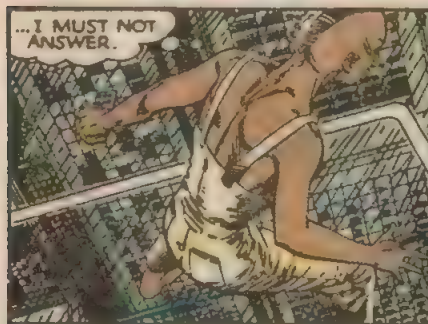
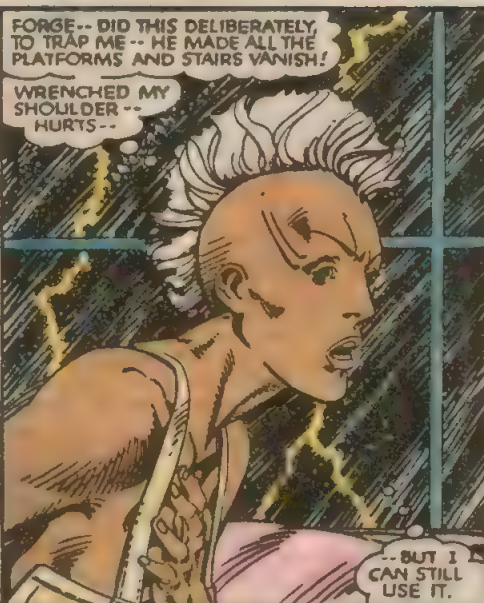
I MUST NOT BE TAKEN.

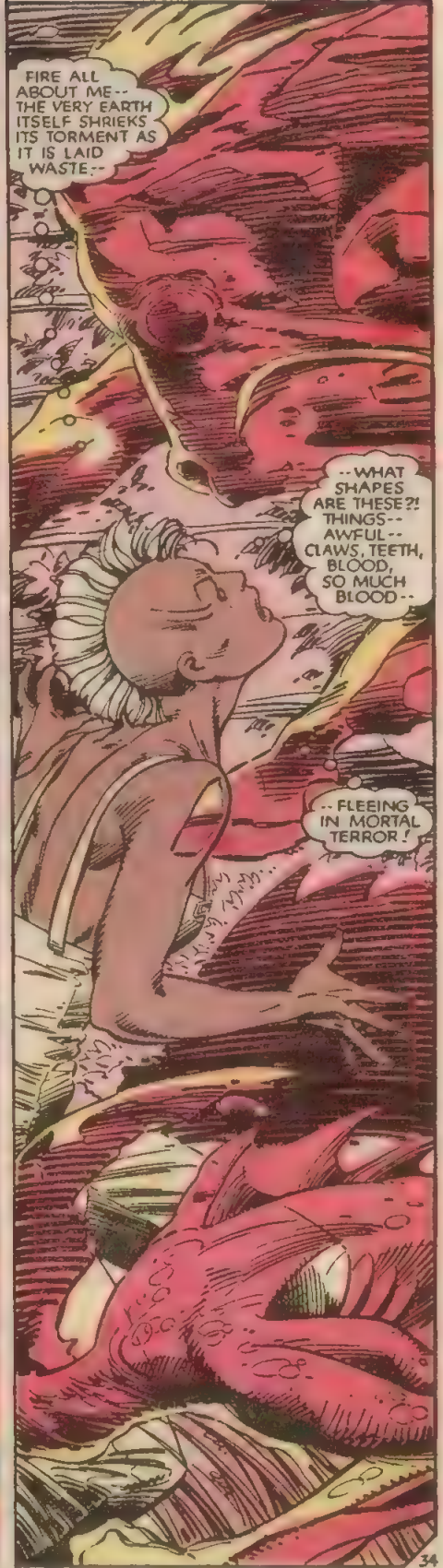
THEY
WILL
PUT ME
IN A
CAGE.

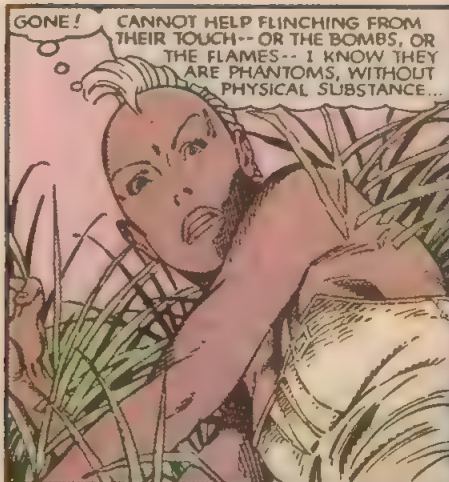
WITHOUT
MY
POWERS...

"I HAVE NO
MEANS TO
FIGHT THEM,
I WILL NEVER
ESCAPE--!"

THE STEPS,
THE FLOOR
-- I AM
FALLING!







GONE! CANNOT HELP FLINCHING FROM THEIR TOUCH-- OR THE BOMBS, OR THE FLAMES-- I KNOW THEY ARE PHANTOMS, WITHOUT PHYSICAL SUBSTANCE...

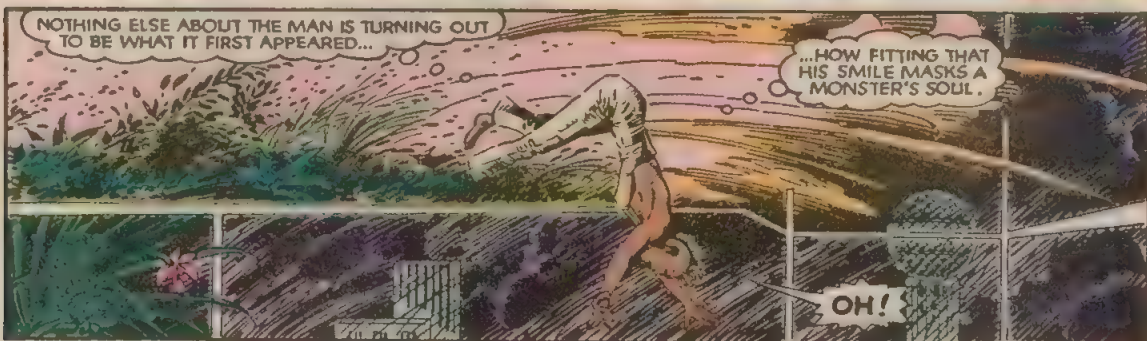


... BUT THEY FEEL SO LIFELIKE!



WERE THOSE APPARITIONS REAL-- IMPOSSIBLE! YET, COULD FORGE'S IMAGINATION BE SO FOUL AS TO CREATE THEM?!

WHY NOT?



NOTHING ELSE ABOUT THE MAN IS TURNING OUT TO BE WHAT IT FIRST APPEARED...

...HOW FITTING THAT HIS SMILE MASKS A MONSTER'S SOUL.

OH!



ORORO!

IN THE CONFUSION, SHE MUST'VE GONE OFF A PLATFORM!

DON'T MOVE, YOU'LL ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE!



SUCH CONCERN-- NO DOUBT... HE HATES THE THOUGHT... OF LOSING HIS PRIZE SPECIMEN.

IF I GO ON, I WILL ONLY FALL AGAIN. FORGE KNOWS HIS ACCURSED MAZE, NO MATTER WHAT I DO HE WILL FIND ME.

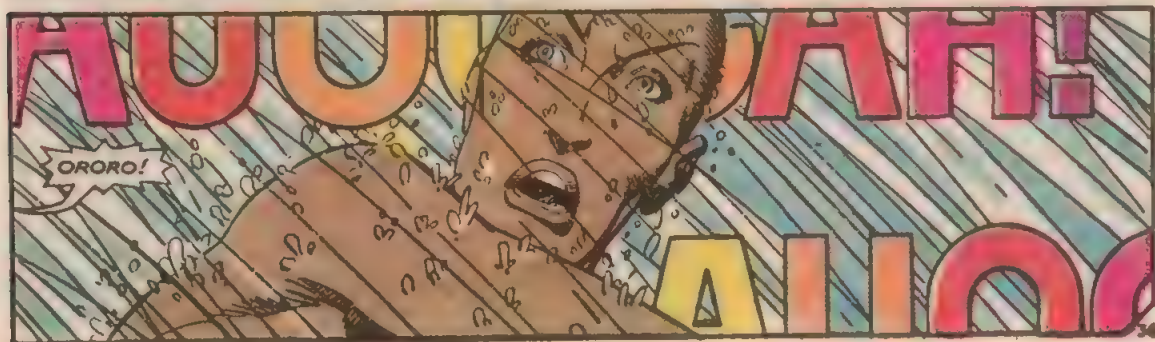
BLESSED GODDESS-- HEAR ONE WHO SERVED YOU WELL AND LOVES YOU STILL -- HAVE MERCY--

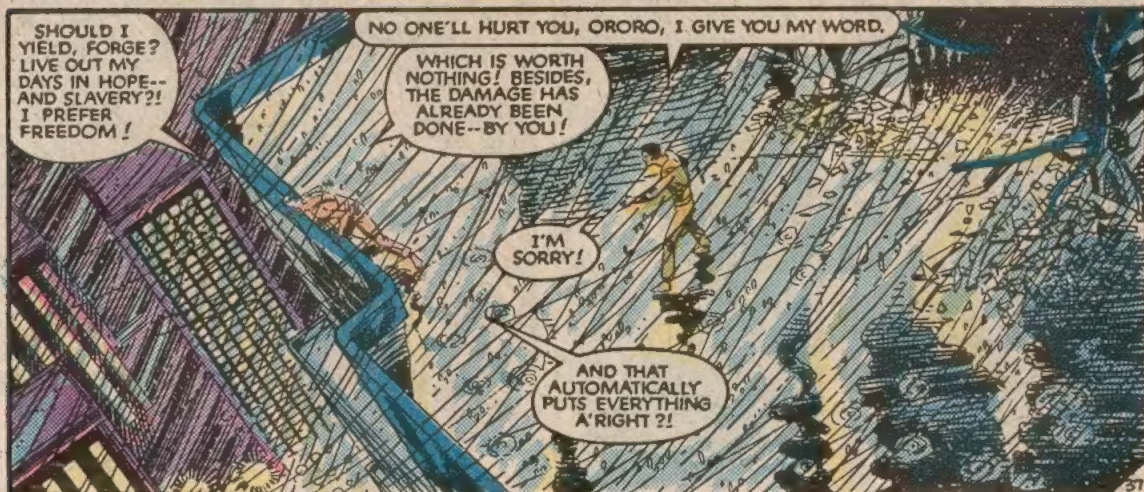
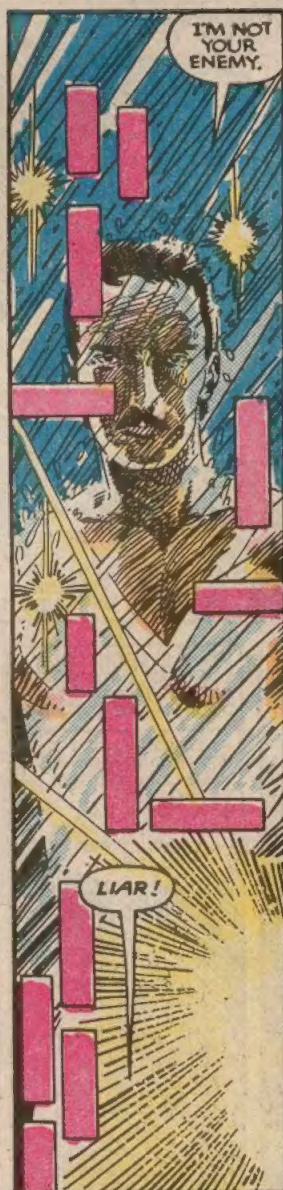


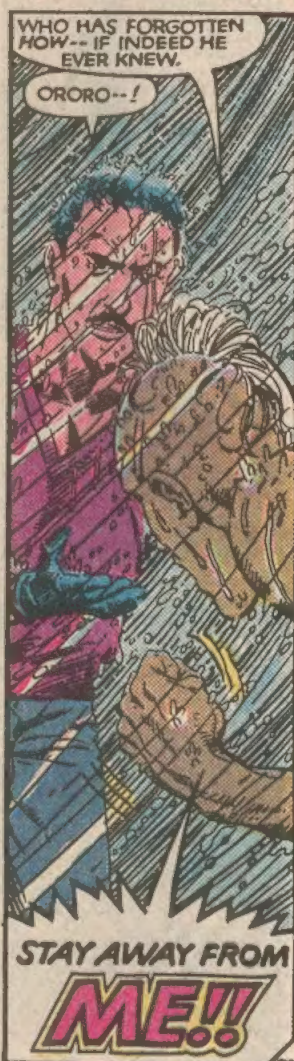
KRRPRMMMM

--HELP ME!!

WAAAAAAGH!









YOU POOR, PATHETIC MAN.



FEEL BETTER?

NO LESS HURT.

NO LESS ANGRY.



YOU LIVE IN YOUR HIGH TOWER-- UNTOUCHABLE, UNTOUCHABLE-- SURROUNDED BY ILLUSION, SO TERRIFIED OF THE REAL, LIVING WORLD...

... YOU CANNOT BEAR TO VIOLATE THE SANCTITY OF YOUR SPACE EVEN WITH SOMETHING AS SMALL AS A FLOWER.



YOUR HOME IS A TRUE REFLECTION OF ITS CREATOR:

COLD, CRUEL, STERILE-- AND, ULTIMATELY, A DECEPTION.

AN IDEAL WORLD WHEREIN THE MASTER OF LIES CAN FEEL SAFE AND SECURE.

